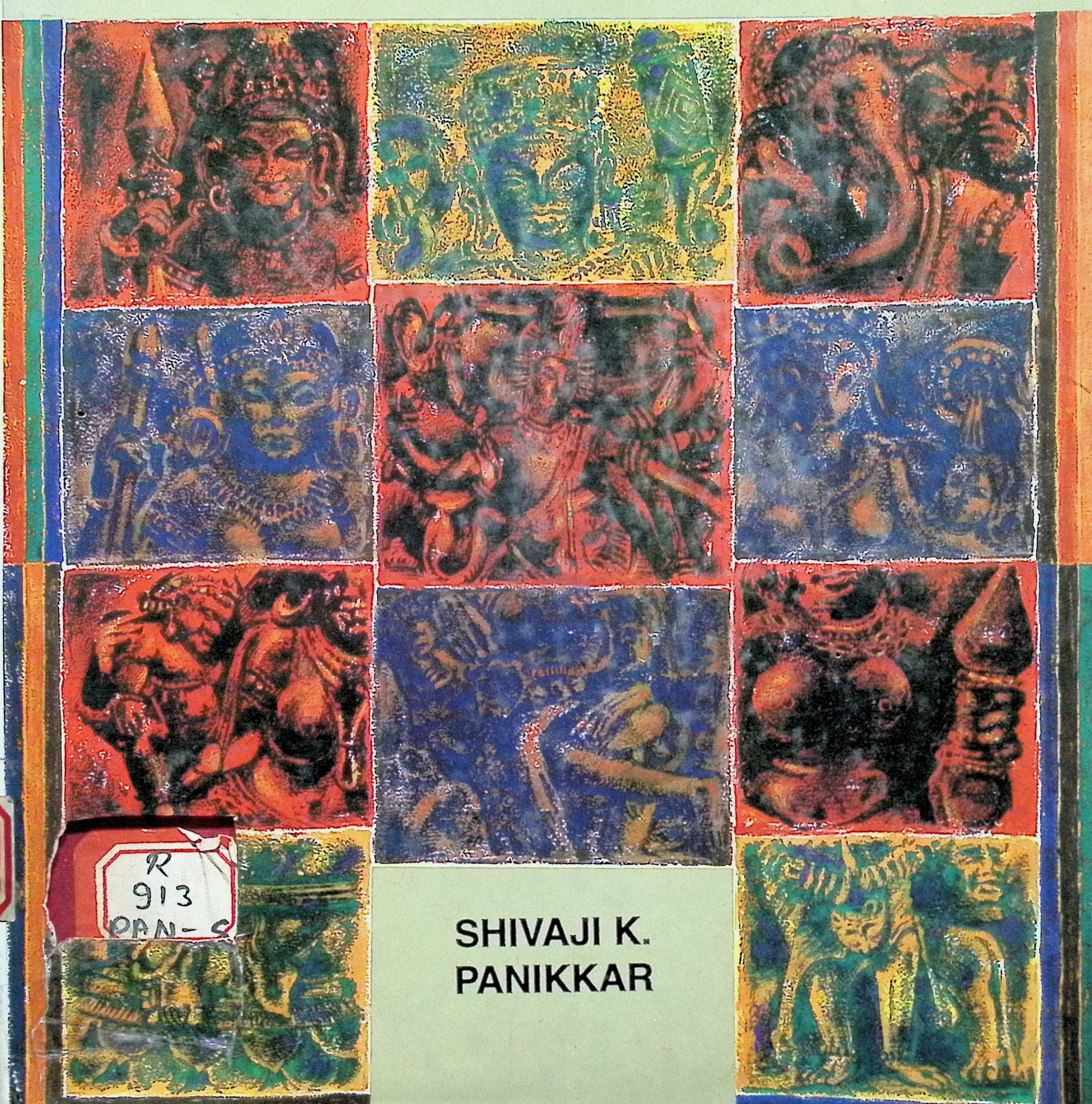
Perspectives in Indian Art & Archaeology, no. 3

SAPTA MĀTṚKĀ WORSHIP AND SCULPTURES



R
913
PAN-S

SHIVAJI K.
PANIKKAR

SAPTA MĀTṚKĀ

WORSHIP AND
SCULPTURES

SHIVAJI K.
PANIKKAR

103052

द्यालय
103052
hivajilc.
RIKA WOR-
HIRES.

दिनांक | सदस्य संख्या

श्वविद्यालय
निशान आदि

(*Perspectives in Indian Art & Archaeology; no. 3*).
1996, xxvi, 300 p. (tent.); Abbreviations: Glossary; Bibliography; Index; 196 b/w photographs; 29 cm.

ISBN 81-246-0074-0

Rs. 1500

DONAT

R
913
PAN-S

पुस्तकालय

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय हरिद्वार

वर्ग संख्या.........

आगत संख्या 103052

पुस्तक-विवरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है। इस तिथि सहित ३०वें दिन तक यह पुस्तक पुस्तकालय में वापिस आ जानी चाहिए अन्यथा ५० पैसे प्रति दिन के हिसाब से विलम्ब दण्ड लगेगा।

Central Library GK (DU) Haridwar

Central Library GK (DU) Haridwar

Saptamātṛkā

Worship and Sculptures

Perspectives in Indian Art & Archaeology

(ISSN - 1806 - 93)

1. The Splendour of Mathura Art & Museum / Dr. R. C. Sharma (ISBN 81-246-0015-5)
2. Proto-Historic Pottery of Indus Valley Civilisation : Study of Painted Motifs / Dr. Sudha Satyawadi (ISBN 81-246-0030-9)

Perspectives in Indian Art & Archaeology, no. 3

Saptamātṛkā Worship and Sculptures

An Iconological Interpretation of Conflicts and Resolutions in the Storied Brāhmanical Icons

103052.

103052

Shivaji K. Panikkar

पुस्तकालय

D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd.
NEW DELHI-110015

Cataloging in Publication Data — DK

Panikkar, Shivaji, 1954-
Saptamātṛkā worship and sculptures.
Perspectives in Indian art & archaeology, no. 3
Includes bibliographical references (p.)
Includes index.

1. Saptamātṛkās (Hindu deities). 2. Worship (Hinduism).
3. Sculpture, Hindu. I. Title. II. Series: Perspectives in Indian
art & archaeology, no. 3

ISBN 81-246-0074-0

First published in India in 1997

R
913
PAN-S

PRESENTED BY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

© Author

No reproduction or translation of this book or part thereof in any form, except brief quotations, should be made without the written permission of the Author and Publishers.

Published and printed by:
D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd.
Regd. office : *'Sri Kunj'*, F-52, Bali Nagar
New Delhi - 110 015
Phone : (011) 546-6019; *Fax* : (011) 546-5926

Dedicated
to
my Parents

Acknowledgements

I AM indebted to Prof. Ratan Parimoo for introducing me to art historical research. Shri. M.A. Dhaky, who spent many hours with me discussing art historical problems and writing on art, apart from almost all aspects of life, has remained an inspiration throughout. Thankfulness, I hope would not hamper the gentle feelings in friendship.

My thanks are due to Dr. R.N. Misra, Shri K.V. Soundara Rajan, late Shri U.P. Shah, Shri Krisna Dev, Shri Anand Krishna, Shri N.P. Joshi, Smt. Devangana Desai, Ms. Carmel Berkson and Shri Prabhakar Apte who have helped me in one way or the other in formulating the concepts in this book. Further, the number of research studies of scholars, which I have perused for this monograph are too many, to mention here. I express my indebtedness to all of them.

I am immensely thankful to American Institute of Indian Studies, Varanasi, for providing a short-term research grant during October-November 1985, which enabled me to make use of the vast photographic documentation, and the library facilities at the institute. Shri V. R. Nambiar had been very helpful, and I express my deep gratitude to him. I would also thank the institute for generously providing a number of photographs for this book. Further, the office staff at the photo archive and at the library of AIIS also had been very cooperative during all my visits there and I am thankful to each one of them.

Thanks to Smt. Chitra Dasarathi for the translations of some relevant portions of the *śilpa* texts. I am thankful to Shri Mohammed Razi for the design of the jacket for the book, and also for trying to understand and interpret the concepts underlying Mātṛkā icons.

Shri Himanshu Pahad has done the copying and printing of photographs, I am thankful to him. I thank Prof. V.H. Sonawane (Deptt. of Archaeology, M.S.U) for the photographs of Mataria Mātṛkā images. The plates 30, 33, 37, 63, 65 to 67; 70, 72, 74 to 80; 89 to 93; 101 to 103; 106 to 109; 111, 117, 133, 134 and 150 to 159 are reproduced from the Regional Documentation Centre, Deptt. of Art History & Aesthetics, M.S.University of Baroda, Baroda. The plates 4 to 26; 28, 29; 37 to 41; 43 to 45; 48 to 59; 62, 64; 68-69; 88, 94 to 100; 104, 105, 112 to 132; 135 to 149; 160 to 186; 194 to 196 are from the photo documentation centre of AIIS, Varanasi. Plates 32, 34, 35, 36, 71 and 73 are reproduced from the book by Sara L. Schastok (1985). Plates 1 to 3 are from the book by Pupul Jayakar (1980). Plates 46 and 87 are from Joanna Williams (1982). Plate 139 is from R. Nagaswamy (1982). Plates 187 to 189 are reproduced from *L.K* no.17 (1974), and plates 190 to 193 are from Douglas Barrett (1958).

Shri Sanjoy Mallik (Deptt. of Art History, M.S.U. Baroda) had been most helpful in editing all the chapters, while also pointing out certain discrepancies in the text, enabling corrections. For having spared so much time from his work, and in particular, I also would like to acknowledge his assistance in getting the Index and the Glossary section done. I am indebted to him.

I am grateful to Shri Anshuman Das Gupta (Deptt. of Art History, M.S.U. Baroda) particularly for giving critical comments on an earlier draft of chapter 7 and the Introduction, apart from lending intellectual stimulation as and when we discussed matters of common concerns.

I would like to acknowledge my friendship with Ms. Preetha Nair, for she had been most challenging to convince, also understanding and encouraging, in the process of revising this book for publication. Thanks to her for the critical comments and also helping to edit.

I remember my parents. This book is dedicated to them. Thanks to Sailaja, for she had been considerate in all respects. Our Damu and Chittira, I cannot thank, but hopefully have learned many things in the process, for, they have seen us work.

And finally, I would like to thank Shri Susheel K. Mittal of the D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd. for taking up this project.

June, 1996 **Shivaji K. Panikkar**
Baroda

Contents

Acknowledgements v

Abbreviations xiii

List of Illustrations xv

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Mātṛkā Prototypes-I 11-30

The divine female and proto-Saptamātṛkā in Indus Valley culture

The divine feminine and the female heptads in Vedic tradition

The conceptions of female deities and proto-Saptamātṛkās in the post-Vedic literary sources

Chapter 2 : Mātṛkā Prototypes-II 31-53

(TUTELARY MĀTṚKĀ DIVINITIES OF THE KUṢĀṆA PERIOD)

A critique of previous researches

The therianthropic Mātṛkās, Skanda and the Bālagraha tradition

Harinegameṣin (Skt.) or Harinegameṣī (Pkt.) and Bālagraha

Hāritī, Kubera, Lakṣmī

Conclusion

Chapter 3 : Saptamātṛkā Worship 55-70

CONCEPTIONS IN LITERARY AND INSCRIPTIONAL SOURCES

The heptad traditions and Saptamātṛkā

Śākta cult, Tāntrism and Saptamātṛkā

Kings, Skanda and Saptamātṛkā

Saptamātṛkā in myths

Saptamātṛkā iconography : *Śilpa* texts

Chapter 4 : Saptamātṛkā Icons-I
(FOURTH TO MID-SIXTH CENTURIES AD) **71-102**

A critique of previous researches and methodological considerations
The early iconographical typologies : Central India
The early iconographical typology : Western India
The early regional traditions : Deccan
The conflation of traditions : early sixth century icons in central India and Gangetic plains
Transitions : Western India
Iconographical summary

Chapter 5 : Saptamātṛkā Icons-II
(MID-SIXTH TO LATE SEVENTH CENTURIES AD) **103-132**

The transitions and the two modes of presentation : Western India
Further elaborations : Central India
The early traditions : Orissa
The early traditions : Ellora
The genesis of south Indian tradition : Deccan
The early south Indian tradition
Iconographical summary

Chapter 6 : Saptamātṛkā Icons-III
(EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES AD) **133-153**

Medieval elements incubate : Western India
Medievalism in prospect : Central India
Further elaborations : Ellora
Iconographic fixity and perfect iconicity : South India
Paramountcy of Śāktism, via Tāntrism : Orissa

Iconographical summary

Chapter 7 : Iconology of Saptamātṛkās
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE **155-190**
Methodological considerations
Neo-Brāhmanism and the acculturation of the goddesses
Acculturation of female gender : Sāṁkhya, Tantra and the goddesses
Śakti myth — a retake : Iconology of Saptamātṛkā
Plates **191-262**
Bibliography **263-274**
Glossary **275-285**
Index **287-301**

Abbreviations

AA — Arts Asiatique.
ABA — Artibus Asiae.
AIIS — American Institute of Indian Studies.
AO — Ars Orientalis.
ASIAR — *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report.*
BMPG — *Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery.*
BAMAM — *Bulletin of the Allen Memorial Art Museum.*
BBMPG — *Bulletin of Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery.*
BDCRT — *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute.*
BITC — *Bulletin of Institute of Traditional Cultures.*
BMAUP — *Bulletin of Museums and Archaeology in U.P.*
BPWMWI — *Bulletin of Prince of Wales Museum of Western India.*
BV — *Bharatiya Vidya.*
EI — *Epigraphia Indica.*
EW — *East and West.*
IHR — *The Indian Historical Review.*
IHQ — *The Indian Historical Quarterly.*
JA — *Jain Antiquary.*
JAS — *Journal of the Asiatic Society.*
JASGBI — *Journal of Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.*
JBRS — *Journal of Bihar Research Society.*
JBBRAS — *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
JIM — *The Journal of Indian Museums.*

JISOA — *Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art.*
JMU — *Journal of the Madras University.*
JNSI — *The Journal of Numismatic Society of India.*
JOI — *Journal of Oriental Institute.*
JUPHS — *The Journal of U.P. Historical Society.*
LK — *Lalit Kala.*
MQ — *Marxist Quarterly.*
OA — *Oriental Art.*
OHRJ — *The Orissa Historical Research Journal.*
SAS — *South Asian Studies.*

List of Illustrations

Pl. 1 *The tree worship and seven figures* (proto-Saptamātṛkā?), Mohenjo-Daro, third millennium BC.

Pl. 2 *Plant delivering figure*, seal, Harappa, third millennium BC.

Pl. 3 *Human sacrifice*, seal, Harappa, third millennium BC.

Pl. 4 *Birth of Skanda*, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, State Museum, Lucknow, (No. D. 250).

Pl. 5 *Birth of Skanda*, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. 34-2491).

Pl. 6 *Therianthropic goddesses*, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. 33-2331).

Pl. 7 *Harinaigameṣin*, Kankali Tila, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, *ca*. 3rd cent. AD. State Museum, Lucknow, (No. J.626).

Pl. 8 *Mother-goddess*, terracotta, Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. 36.2688).

Pl. 9 *Mātṛkā Harinaigameṣin* (?), Manoharpur, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. E-3).

Pl. 10 *Mātṛkā Harinaigameṣin* (?), Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. E-2).

Pl. 11 *Mātṛkā Harinaigameṣin* (?), Kankali Tila, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura.

Pl. 12 *Hāritī*, Bhutesvara Tila, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, *ca*. 2nd cent. AD Government Museum, Mathura, (No. 00F8).

Pl. 13 *Hāritī*, Tayapur, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, *ca*. 2nd cent. AD Government Museum, Mathura, (No. F.30).

Pl. 14 *Kubera, Lakṣmī and Hāritī*, Manoharpur, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. C-30).

Pl. 15 *Śrī-Lakṣmī*, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, Government Museum, Mathura, (No.

00.F26).

Pl. 16 *Sapta Ṛṣi Patnīs and Skanda*, Dhangaon, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, *ca*. 4th cent. AD, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. F-38).

Pl. 17 *Five seated Mātṛkās along with Skanda*, Jamalpur Tila, Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, *ca*. 4th cent. AD., Government Museum, Mathura, (No. F.39).

Pl. 18 *Skanda and Mātṛkā*, find spot not known, Kuṣāṇa period, *ca*. 3rd-4th cent. AD, Government Museum, Mathura, (No. 35-2771).

Pl. 19 *Kaumāri* (?), Mathura, Kuṣāṇa period, *ca*. 4th cent. AD, Government Museum, Mathura.

Pl. 20 *Saptamātṛkā group*, Cave 6-A, Udayagiri, (Vidisha,M.P.), late 4th or early 5th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 21 *Saptamātṛkās and Śiva*, rock-cut, Badoh-Pathari, (Vidisha, M.P.), early 5th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 22 *Śiva, Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī and Kaumāri* (?), *Saptamātṛkā group* (*detail*), rock-cut, Bodoh-pathari, (Vidisha, M.P.), early 5th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 23 *Cāmuṇḍā, Saptamātṛkā group* (*detail*), rock-cut, Badoh-Pathari, (Vidisha, M.P.), early 5th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 24 *Mātṛkā*, Besnagar, (Vidisha, M.P.), early 5th cent. AD, National Museum, New Delhi.

Pl. 25 *Mātṛkā*, Besnagar, (Vidisha, M.P.), early 5th cent. AD, Central Museum, Gwalior.

Pl. 26 *Mātṛkā*, Besnagar, (Vidisha, M.P.), early 5th cent. AD, Central Museum, Gwalior.

Pl. 27 *Mātṛkā*, Samalaji, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), terracotta, *ca*. 4th cent. AD, Baroda Museum.

Pl. 28 *Mātṛkā*, Devnimori, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), *ca*. mid or late 5th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 29 *Mātṛkā*, Devnimori, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat) *ca*. mid or late 5th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 30 *Mātṛkā*, Vartol, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), last quarter of 5th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 31 *Mātṛkā*, Samalaji (group-A), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat), late 5th or early 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 32 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Samalaji, (group-A), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat), late 5th or early 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 33 *Mātṛkā*, Samalaji, (group-A), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), late 5th or early 6th cent. AD, National Museum, New Delhi.

Pl. 34 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Tanesara, (group-A), (Udaipur, Rajasthan), first quarter of 6th cent. AD, Los Angeles County Museum.

Pl. 35 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-A), (Udaipur, Rajasthan), first quarter of 6th cent. AD, British Museum.

Pl. 36 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-A), (Udaipur, Rajasthan), first quarter of 6th cent. AD, Cleveland Museum.

Pl. 37 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-B), (Udaipur, Rajasthan), first quarter of 6th cent. AD, National Museum, New Delhi.

Pl. 38 *Śiva and Saptamātṛkā group*, west wall, western *upavarṇaka*-chamber, east wing of Cave-I, Elephanta (Kolaba, Maharashtra), second quarter of 6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 39 *Kaumāri, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Saptamātṛkā group*, western *upavarṇaka*-chamber, east wing of Cave-I, Elephanta (Kolaba, Maharashtra), second quarter 6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 40 *Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Devī and Gaṇeśa, Saptamātṛkā group — ending at left*, western *upavarṇaka*-chamber, east wing of Cave-I, Elephanta (Kolaba, Maharashtra), second quarter 6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 41 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-B), (Udaipur, Rajasthan), first quarter of 6th cent. AD, Pratap Museum, Udaipur.

Pl. 42 *Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī and Kaumāri*, west wall, northern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, north wall, Ravulaphadi Cave, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka), mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 43 *Kaumāri, Kāla Bhairava and Vaiṣṇavī*, north-west wall corner, northern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, north wall, mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 44 *Vārāhī, Aindri and Cāmuṇḍā*, east wall, northern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, north wall, Ravulaphadi Cave, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka), mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 45 *Śiva-Naṭaraja flanked by Gaṇeśa and Pārvatī*, northern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, north wall, Ravulaphadi Cave, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka), mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 46 *Saptamātṛkās with Śiva and Gaṇeśa*, rock-cut, Rajghati, Deogarh, (Lalitpur, U.P.), late 5th or early 6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 47 *Saptamātṛkās with Gaṇeśa and Śiva*, rock-cut, Naharghati, Deogarh, (Lalitpur, U.P.), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 48 *Brahmāṇī*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 49 *Kaumāri*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 50 *Vaiṣṇavī*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 51 *Aindri*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 52 *Bust of Aindri*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 53 *Brahmāṇī*, Mundesvari, (Rohtas, Bihar), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 54 *Maheśvarī,* Mundesvari, (Rohtas, Bihar) *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD., Patna Museum.

Pl. 55 *Aindri*, Mundesvari, (Rohtas, Bihar) mid-6th cent. AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 56 *Aindri*, Amanva (Shahabad, Bihar), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Pl. 57 *Aindri*, Jagat, (Udaipur, Rajasthan), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, Pratap Museum, Udaipur.

Pl. 58 *Brahmāṇī*, Jagat, (Udaipur, Rajasthan), *ca*. mid-6th cent. AD, Pratap Museum, Udaipur.

Pl. 59 *Brahmāṇī*, Samalaji, (group-B), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), second quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 60 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Samalaji, (group-B), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), second quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 61 *Skanda*, Samalaji, (group-B), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat), second quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 62 *Śiva and Brahmāṇī*, Tintoi, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), mid-6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 63 *Vaiṣṇavī and Kaumāri*, Tintoi, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), mid-6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 64 *Cāmuṇḍā and Gaṇeśa*, Tintoi, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), mid-6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 65 *Maheśvarī*, Samalaji, (group-C), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 66 *Vārāhī,* Samalaji, (group-C), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 67 *Aindri*, Samalaji (group-C), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 68 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Samalaji (group-C), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 69 *Śiva*, Samalaji, (group-C), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 70 *Aindri*, Dungarpur, (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, collection : His Highness, the ruler of Dungarpur.

Pl. 71 *Kaumāri*, Amjhara, (group-A), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, Dungarpur Museum.

Pl. 72 *Vāyavī* (?), Samalaji (group-C), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 73 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Amjhara, (group-A), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, Dungarpur Museum.

Pl. 74 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), mid-6th cent. AD, Dungarpur Museum.

Pl. 75 *Brahmāṇī,* Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), mid-6th cent. AD, Dungarpur Museum.

Pl. 76 *Kaumāri*, Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), mid-6th cent. AD, Dungarpur Museum.

Pl. 77 *Vāyavī* (?), Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), mid-6th cent. AD, Dungarpur Museum.

Pl. 78 *Vīṇādhara Śiva*, Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan), mid-6th cent. AD, Dungarpur Museum.

Pl. 79 *Kaumāri*, Samalaji, (group-D), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 80 *Brahmāṇī*, Samalaji, (group-D), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat), third quarter of 6th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 81 *Maheśvarī*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat), late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 82 *Kaumāri*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat), late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 83 *Vārāhī*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat), late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 84 *Aindri*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat), late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 85 *Ambikā*(?) or *Cāmuṇḍā*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat), late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 86 *Kāla Bhairava*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat), late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 87 *Saptamātṛkā*, rock-cut, Mandor, (Jodhpur, Rajasthan), early 7th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 88 *Aindri*, Dhank, (Junagadh, Gujarat), Śrī Muñjeśvara temple second half of 6th or early 7th cent. AD.

Pl. 89 *Brahmāṇī*, Kotesvar, (North Gujarat), late 6th or first quarter of 7th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 90 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Kotesvar, (North Gujarat), late 6th or first quarter of 7th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 91 *Aindri*, Kotesvar, (North Gujarat), late 6th or first quarter of 7th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 92 *Vārāhī*, Kotesvar, (North Gujarat), late 6th or first quarter of 7th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 93 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Kotesvar, (North Gujarat), late 6th or first quarter of 7th cent. AD, BMPG, Baroda.

Pl. 94 *Vārāhī*, Mt. Abu, (Sirohi, Rajasthan), mid-7th cent. AD, Mt. Abu Art Gallery.

Pl. 95 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Mt. Abu, (Sirohi, Rajasthan), mid-7th cent. AD, Mt. Abu Art Gallery.

Pl. 96 *Brahmāṇī*, Kota, (Shivpuri, M.P.), *ca*. late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, Central Museum, Gwalior.

Pl. 97 *Kaumāri*, Kota (Shivpuri, M.P.), *ca*. late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, Central Museum, Gwalior.

Pl. 98 *Aindri*, Kota (Shivpuri, M.), *ca*. late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, Central Museum, Gwalior.

Pl. 99 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Kota, (Shivpuri, M.P.), *ca*. late 6th or early 7th cent. AD, Central Museum, Gwalior.

Pl. 100 *Brahmāṇī*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar), *ca*. second half of 6th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 101 *Maheśvarī*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar), *ca*. second half of 6th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 102 *Kaumāri*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar), *ca*. second half of 6th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 103 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar), *ca*. second half of 6th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 104 *Saptamātṛkā group*, northern wall, *jagamohana*, Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri,Orissa), *ca.* first half of 7th cent. AD.

Pl. 105 *Saptamātṛkā group*, northern wall, *jagamohana*, Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa), *ca.* first half of 7th cent. AD.

Pl. 106 *Brahmāṇī*, Saraikela, (Bihar), *ca.* early 7th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 107 *Kaumāri*, Saraikela, (Bihar), *ca.* early 7th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 108 *Vārāhī*, Saraikela, (Bihar), *ca.* early 7th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 109 *Cāmuṇḍā,* Saraikela, (Bihar), *ca.* early 7th century AD, Patna Museum.

Pl. 110 *Andhakāsuravadha*, Cave-15, Upper storey, north wall, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* early 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 111 *Saptamātṛkās, Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrti, (detail)*, Kailāśanātha temple, (Cave-16), Porch, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 112 *Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti,* south eastern corner, *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, Cave-14, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 113 *Saptamātṛkās*, south wall, *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, Cave-14, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 114 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Cave-14, south wall, *pradakṣiṇāpatha,* Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 115 *Gaṇeśa, Kāla Bhairava and Kālī*, south wall, *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, Cave-14, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 116 *Vīṇādhara Śiva, Brahmāṇī, Maheśvari, Kaumāri and Vaiṣṇavī*, southern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, south wall, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 117 *Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā and Gaṇeśa*, southern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, south wall, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 118 *Vārāhī*, southern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, south wall, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 119 *Kāla Bhairava and Kālī*, west wall, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 120 *Saptamātṛkās*, south wall of *maṇḍapa*, Dhokesvara Mahadeva Cave, Doke Takli, (Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 6th cent. AD.

Pl. 121 *Śiva, Brahmāṇī and Maheśvarī*, east and south wall, southern side shrine, Cave-22, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), *ca.* late 7th cent. AD.

Pl. 122	*Saptamātṛkās*, south wall, southern side shrine, Cave-22, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra) mid-7th cent AD.
Pl. 123	*Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Gaṇésa and Kāla Bhairava, Saptamātṛkā group (detail)*, south west wall, Cave-22, southern side shrine, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra) mid-7th cent AD.
Pl. 124	*Vīṇādhara Śiva*, Bāla Brahma Temple, Alampur (A.P.), *parivāra*- shrine on the south east, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 125	*Brahmāṇī*, Bāla Brahma temple, Alampur, (A.P.) *parivāra*-shrine on the south east, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 126	*Kaumāri*, Bāla Brahma temple, Alampur, (A.P.) *parivāra*-shrine on the south east, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 127	*Vārāhī*, Bāla Brahma temple, Alampur, (A.P.) *parivāra*-shrine on the south east, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 128	*Cāmuṇḍā*, Bāla Brahma temple, Alampur, (A.P.) *parivāra*-shrine on the south east, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 129	*Brahmāṇī and Maheśvarī*, Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.), in the Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple compound, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 130	*Maheśvarī and Vaiṣṇavī*, Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.), in the Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple compound, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 131	*Kaumāri and Vārāhī,* Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.), in the Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple compound, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 132	*Aindri and Cāmuṇḍā*, Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.), in the Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple compound, *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 133	*Mātṛkā group*, Galaganatha temple, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka), *ca.* 8th cent. AD, Site museum, Aihole.
Pl. 134	*Maheśvarī,* Galaganatha temple, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka), *ca.* 8th cent. Site museum, Aihole.
Pl. 135	*Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti,* Kapoteśvara temple, Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.), *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 136	*Brahmāṇī*, Chezerla, Kapoteśvara temple, Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.), *ca.* 7th cent. AD.
Pl. 137	*Vārāhī,* Chezerla, Kapoteśvara temple, Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.), *ca.*7th cent. AD.
Pl. 138	*Cāmuṇḍā*, Chezerla, Kapoteśvara temple, Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.), *ca.*7th cent. AD.

Pl. 139 *Brahmāṇī*, Malagon, (Sirohi, Rajasthan), *ca.* late 7th or early 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 140 *Saptamātṛkā group*, between the cells 21 and 22 of the cloister wall, Kailāśanātha temple, Kanchipuram, (Tamil Nadu) *ca.* 720 AD.

Pl. 141 *Vārāhī*, Malagon, (Sirohi, Rajasthan), *ca.* late 7th or early 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 142 *Maheśvarī*, Devangan, (Sirohi, Rajasthan), *ca.* first half of 8th cent. AD, Sardar Museum, Jodhpur.

Pl. 143 *Aindri*, Devangan, (Sirohi, Rajasthan), *ca.* first half of 8th cent. AD, Sardar Museum, Jodhpur.

Pl. 144 *Śiva-Naṭarāja*, Modi, (Mandasor, M.), (group-A), *ca.* mid-8th cent. AD, Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, Bhanpura.

Pl. 145 *Maheśvarī*, Modi, (Mandasor, M.P.), (group-A), *ca.* mid-8th cent. AD, Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, Bhanpura.

Pl. 146 *Brahmāṇī,* Modi, (Mandasor, M.P.), (group-B), *ca.* mid-8th cent. AD, Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, Bhanpura.

Pl. 147 *Kaumāri*, Modi, (Mandasor, M.), (group-B), *ca.* mid-8th cent. AD, Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, Bhanpura.

Pl. 148 *Vārāhī*, Modi, (Mandasor, M.P.), (group-B), *ca.* mid-8th cent. AD, Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, Bhanpura.

Pl. 149 *Aindri,* Modi, (Mandasor, M.P.), (group-B), *ca.* mid-8th cent. AD, Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, Bhanpura.

Pl. 150 *Kaumāri*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat), Sindhvai Mātā Temple compound, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 151 *Maheśvari*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat), Sindhvai Mātā Temple compound, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 152 *Aindri*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat), Sindhvai Mātā Temple compound, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 153 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Karvan, (Vadodara,Gujarat), Sindhvai Mātā Temple compound, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 154 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Karvan, (Vadodara,Gujarat), Sindhvai Mātā Temple compound, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 155 *Vāyavī* (?), Karvan, (Vadodara,Gujarat), Sindhvai Mātā Temple compound, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 156 *Torso of Vārāhī*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat), Kāśīviśvanāth temple, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 157 *Lower part of Vārāhī*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat), Kāśīviśvanath temple, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 158 *Lower part of Śiva*, Karvan, (Vadodaṛa, Gujarat), Kāśīviśvanāth temple, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 159 *Kāla Bhairava*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat), Sindhvai Mātā Temple compound, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 160 *Kaumāri*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat) Ekādaśaliṅgeśvara temple, *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD.

Pl. 161 *Vīṇādhara Śiva*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat), *ca.* first half of 9th cent. AD, Museology Department, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Pl. 162 *Brahmāṇī*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat), *ca.* first half of 9th cent. AD, Museology Department, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Pl. 163 *Maheśvarī*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat), *ca.* first half of 9th cent. AD, Museology Department, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Pl. 164 *Kaumāri*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat), *ca.* first half of 9th cent. AD, Museology Department, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Pl. 165 *Vārāhī*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat), *ca.* first half of 9th cent. AD, Museology Department, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Pl. 166 *Aindri*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat), *ca.* first half of 9th cent. AD, Museology Department, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Pl. 167 *Kāla Bhairava*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat), *ca.* first half of 9th cent. AD, Museology Department, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Pl. 168 *Brahmāṇī*, Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan), Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Mahādeva temple, south *janga*, *ca.* mid-10th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 169 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan), Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Mahādeva temple, west *janga*, *ca.* mid-10th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 170 *Vārāhī*, Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan), Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Mahādeva temple, west *janga*, *ca.* mid-10th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 171 *Cāmuṇḍā and Kṣemaṅkarī*(?), Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan), Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Mahādeva temple, north *janga*, *ca.* mid-10th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 172 *Brahmāṇī*, Varaman, (Sirohi, Rajasthan), *ca.* AD, 950, Government Museum, Jaipur.

Pl. 173 *Kaumāri*, Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.) (group-B), *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD, *in situ*.

Pl. 174 *Aindri*, Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.) (group-B), *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD, *in situ.*

Pl. 175 *Brahmāṇī*, Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.) (group-B), *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD, *in situ.*

Pl. 176 *Vārāhī*, Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.) (group-B), *ca.* second half of 8th cent. AD, *in situ.*

Pl. 177 *Mātṛkā-paṭa*, Kangaroll, (Agra, U.P.), *ca.* late 8th or early 9th cent. AD, Government Museum, Mathura.

Pl. 178 *Mātṛkā-paṭa*, Kannauj, (Farukhabad, U.P.), *ca.* mid-9th cent. AD, Puratattva Sangrahalaya, Kannauj.

Pl. 179 *Maheśvarī and Kaumāri, Saptamātṛkās (detail),* south wall, Yajñaśālā, Kailāśanātha temple, south side shrine, Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), late 8th or early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 180 *Vārāhī, Aindri and Cāmuṇḍā*, south wall, Yajñaśālā, Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), late 8th or early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 181 *Kāla Bhairava, Aparajitā and Durgā,* west wall, Yajñaśālā, Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), late 8th or early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 182 *The queen and attendants*, east wall, Yajñaśāla, Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra), late 8th or early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 183 *Brahmāṇī*, Puṣpavaneśvara temple, Tiruppunturutti, (Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu), *ca.* early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 184 *Maheśvarī*, Puṣpavaneśvara temple, Tiruppunturutti, (Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu), *ca.* early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 185 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Puṣpavaneśvara temple, Tiruppunturutti, (Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu), *ca.* early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 186 *Vārāhī*, Puṣpavaneśvara temple, Tiruppunturutti, (Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu), *ca.* early 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 187 *Brahmāṇī*, Perunkanchi, (north Arcot, Tamil Nadu), *ca.* late 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 188 *Vārāhī*, Perunkanchi, (north Arcot, Tamil Nadu), *ca.* late 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 189 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Perunkanchi, (north Arcot, Tamil Nadu), *ca.* late 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 190 *Brahmāṇī*, Virattaneśvara temple, Tiruttani, (Chittor, Tamil Nadu), *maṇḍapa* of the shrine, last quarter of 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 191 *Vārāhī*, Virattaneśvara temple, Tiruttani, (Chittor, Tamil Nadu), *maṇḍapa* of the shrine, last quarter of 9th cent. AD.

Pl. 192	*Aindri*, Virattaneśvara temple, Tiruttani, (Chittor, Tamil Nadu), *maṇḍapa* of the shrine, last quarter of 9th cent. AD.
Pl. 193	*Cāmuṇḍā,* Virattaneśvara temple, Tiruttani, (Chittor, Tamil Nadu), *maṇḍapa* of the shrine, last quarter of 9th cent. AD.
Pl. 194	*Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumāri and Vaiṣṇavī*, south wall of *garbhagṛha*, Vaitāl Deul, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa), *ca.* AD 775.
Pl. 195	*Vārāhī and Aindri,* west wall of *garbhagṛha*, right of Cāmuṇḍā, Vaitāl Deul, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa), *ca.* AD 775.
Pl. 196	*Vārāhī, Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Kauśikī, Gaṇeśa*, west wall of *garbhagṛha*, Vaitāl Deul, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa), *ca.* AD 775.

Introduction

THE *Devī Māhātmya*, the early *Śākta* text, describes the Mātṛkās, Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumāri, Vaiṣṇavī, Aindri, Vārāhī, Narasiṃhī, and Cāmuṇḍā as *śaktīs* (embodiments of the potent feminine powers) of the respective Brāhmanical gods, who are generically named as *mātṛ* or *mātri*, and in a group as *mātṛgaṇa*, meaning mothers. Etymologically *mātṛ* derives from the root *mā*, meaning to measure, or to be contained or comprised in.[1] *Mātṛ*, thus means a mother, who contains, obviously referring to the maternal potential. Monier Monier-Williams, based on the *Ṛgveda* interprets *mātṛ* as, to measure or to traverse, to be large or long enough to find room or to be contained in.[2] *Ṛgveda* interprets *mātri* as one who measures across or traverses, and as one who has true knowledge,[3] obviously meaning that of regeneration. *Mātṛ* also means a mother as a term of respect or endearment.[4] When used generically, *mātṛkā* means all kind of groups.[5] Mātṛkā as used in the present work refers to the *śakti* embodiments of respective gods as described in the Brāhmaṇical literature, who in iconic sculptural portrayals are the divine mothers and warriors, used for ritual worship.

The Mātṛkā-worship and the related manifestations in plastic arts are a pan-Indian phenomenon, the antiquity of which is considered to be as ancient as that of Śiva and the fertility goddesses of the Indus Valley civilization. The distinct, ideational, literary, visual and ritualistic manifestations of the Mātṛkā concept, are interconnected with the totality of Brāhmanical and non-Brāhmanical religious traditions. And these are integral components of the multifarious historical processes of Indian society.

The initial inspiration for this came to pass incidentally in May-June, 1982, while assisting Prof. Ratan Parimoo in documenting *Vaiṣṇava* sculptures in Madhyadeśa. A number of Mātṛkā sculptural portrayals in this region, including some of the earliest ones, prompted me to imagine their cultic significance in the Brāhmanical pantheon. The early Mātṛkā sculptures at Badoh-Pathari, Udayagiri, Besnagar and Deogarh, their iconographical and stylistic features, further made me inquire about the possibilities of studying the evolutionary process therein. Subsequent research opened up the possibility of probing into the problem of origin, development and diffusion of the Mātṛkā concept and images at distant regional centres. At this stage assisting Prof. Parimoo on the U.G.C. research project on *Vaiṣṇava* art had greatly helped me in formulating a methodology suited for such an iconographical study. Specifically, the research carried out on the development, diffusion, regional variations, textual sources and sculptural manifestations and meanings of a single iconographic form, that is of the *Śeṣaśāyī* Viṣṇu, provided valuable experience in this direction (*Sculptures of Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu*, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda, 1983). Further, a valid ground was yet to be arrived at, in order to locate the iconography, which lead me into the dialectics of political, social and religious histories. And a theoretical premise evolved incorporating the gender issues as well, giving the work, I think, extensive and intensive implications.

The pioneering effort of T.A. Gopinatha Rao discusses only the most obvious iconographical features of Mātṛkās, where these are correlated to the myths and *śilpa śāstra* stipulations.[6] J.N. Banerjea's work which followed, traces in certain detail the linear chronological sequence of the cult of goddesses from the Indus Valley civilization till the medieval times. Within this background,the general descriptive analysis of the two important iconographic forms, namely, that of Durgā and Saptamātṛkās have been undertaken.[7] The later art-historical researchers can be seen either resorting to the models set by these two scholars or merely adding up further sculptural and literary data in the general fund of information regarding the goddesses tradition. The main emphasis was trying to match the sculptural and literary data.

A more recent comprehensive work on Saptamātṛkā iconology, that of Katherine Anne Harper, confines itself to the analysis of the religious and cultural meanings and evolutions of symbols, while also presenting a chronology of the images.[8] The scholar presents the anthropological data of the worship of the seven goddesses in the folk cultures and proposes a thesis of confluence of aboriginal and Vedic symbolism, but treats it as if these were part and parcel of a monolithic tradition. The approach excludes a dialectical perspective of the wider historical processes, and hence remains decontexualised from the larger frame of socio-politico-economic and cultural meaning of art and religion. Methodologically, the correlation of the more recent anthropological data concerning the worship of heptads with the ancient Vedic tradition of the same, turns out to be faulty, since it excludes the possibility of the acculturation during the in-between periods, putting forth a stationary model of an unchanging village India.

A large body of research publications of the more recent years analyzing the origin and development of Devī worship in India using evolutionary models have been extensively used in the present study. A major methodological facet of this study derives from the structural analysis of Devī myths by scholars. These are incorporated in the relevant places of this book.

The major aspects of the Mātṛkā concept can now be delineated. Inherently, the Mātṛkā divinities are dichotomous personalities. Though represented as goddesses, their identity and attributes largely derive from the respective male deities. Theologically, this is explained in terms of them being *śaktī*s, or the feminine power of the male gods, and hence imply a co-existence of the principles of male and female in the one and the same. Further, Mātṛkās of the Purāṇic myths are militant, ferocious, blood drinking goddesses of the battlefield, assisting either Śiva or Devī in their battle against *asura*s. Yet, in the sculptural portrayals, generally, (at times, with the exception of Cāmuṇḍā), they are depicted as benevolent, compassionate and aristocratic mothers. Their motherliness is often accentuated by the playful attitude towards the children, with whom they are portrayed in certain regional traditions. But, the *āyudha*s, the war props they hold, imply quite a different meaning level, and indicate conflations of and resolutions of conflicts based on the socio-political and economic realities of ancient India. This, validates the extended title of the book, 'Conflicts and Resolutions in the Storied Brāhmanical Icons'.

Mātṛkās embody syncretism between various principal sectarian Brāhmanical cults and other theophanies. Yet, the tradition proves the primacy of *Śaiva* cult over others, considering the specificity of iconographic programme, and also since Mātṛkās form a significant component in the iconographical layout of *Śaiva* caves and structural temples.

The book is iconological, since the interpretations of the icons are contextualised within the larger framework of historical evolution. Thus, the socio-politico-economic and religious contexts of art receive an equal importance as the art itself, and is treated as an integral part of the sculptural manifestations. The particular iconographical tradition which begins during the Gupta period, presents highly complex meaning levels as it goes through varied sculptural interpretations in the subsequent centuries at different regional centres. In the medieval times the importance of Mātṛkā divinities recedes considerably, but lingers on faintly in the Hindu pantheon till today. During the medieval times cultically and iconographically a more elaborate tradition of Causaṭ Yoginīs are invented, possibly based on the Mātṛkā tradition, which by itself is a separate area of study.

The book is also an attempt at transcending the limitation of fragmentary understanding of the Saptamātṛkā iconography, since it takes into consideration temporal and spatial developments in the pan-Indian context. Further, the book also throws light on the significance of Mātṛkā images in the wider context of Brāhmanical art (of *Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava* and *Śākta* denominations) which had been overlooked at least by some scholars.

Before going into the theoretical framework and the methodology employed, a few explanations of the terminologies may be useful. The terms Āryan, non-Āryan or Dravidian are not used with any implication of races, but imply only the class differences, or at times with an intent to distinguish the orthodox and heterodox social spheres. Brāhmanical denotes the religion essentially practised and propagated by the brāhmaṇa *varṇa*, including the other *varṇa* groups who came under this hegemony. This accultured realm is denoted by the use of the term neo-Brāhmanism, which is differentiated from the orthodox Vedism/Brāhmanism. The use of the term Hinduism is purposefully avoided in these, since it is an invention of the European colonizers, and may be more appropriate for the modern Hinduism.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Apart from the prime concern with the sculptural materials, the Brāhmanical religion in totality, particularly neo-Brāhmanism,[9] with the sectarian import of the latter and the historical issues of class and gender, are the primary foci of this study. The heterogeneity, inconsistency and contradictory conflations noticed in the primary materials are very many. This is so, since the catholicity of neo-Brāhmanism "denies nothing and is intolerant of no level or phase of religious consciousness".[10] Considered theoretically, acculturation is viewed as a historical strategy of the evolving dominant power nexus between *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya* castes, effecting subordination of the 'lower' classes and female gender, through assimilation. The co-existence of disparate elements and stages of religion from the primitive to the sophisticated; the mythological, theological and philosophical rationalisations, and the absorptions and re-interpretations of these were contained within an overall system, which allowed adequate space for conflict and resolutions of sustenance among the dominant power groups. Symptomatically, it can be read within a colonizer-colonized mode of discourse.

The divine feminine in the Brāhmanical tradition, throughout its history, has remained a male construct, deriving its validation, legitimation and 'representation' within the patriarchal kinship relations of the higher *varṇa* groups, and having socio-political implications on all the different sections of the larger Brāhmanical society, which is composed of conflicting classes. However, such a theoretical proposition needs to be validated while dealing with several such highly complex constructs. For example, there exist in the tradition a conceptual differentiation between the consorts and the *śakti*; the feminine power of the male gods.[11] While the power position of a female consort is absolutely determined by the respective male gods, *śakti* suggests a relatively 'autonomous' power position. Yet, in different contexts of Brāhmanical mythology consorts figure-in as *śakti*, making the anomalous power position of the goddesses a complex problematic. A very good example is the case of the subordinate power position of *śakti* in the *Ardhanārīśvara* myth and icons. Hence, the theoretical premise adopted for the interpretations pertains to the relative nature of the power of the female to that of the male, especially while considering myths as reflections of societal relations. The questions of relative gender power is viewed as located within the power conflicts and resolutions of classes. In other words, the relative gender positions criss-cross with the relative class positions and need to be viewed in this manner.

The heavily loaded sign of conflict and resolution of classes and genders which is encoded in the Brāhmanical mythology and icons, is used for interpreting/analyzing the functioning of the dominant social psyche, constantly determining and producing representational models in art traditions and in social life. "As Representation the term stresses that images and texts are no mirrors of the world, merely reflecting their sources. Representation stresses something refashioned, coded in rhetorical, textual or pictorial terms, quite distinct from its social existence."[12]

Before taking into consideration the question of 'representation' proper, it is necessary to address the issue of the problematic for the Indian art historical practice. Indian art historical studies has largely become isolated from the other social and historical sciences, where the dominant trend is anti-historical. Paradoxical as it is, histories of styles, monuments or schools and iconographical descriptions and explanations remain essentially 'unhistorical'. The issue of historical interpretation is too often replaced by mere chronology, in which changes in style and iconography are explained by popular theory of exhaustion, novelty and reaction.[13]

The book adheres to the premise that the artistic form which originates, develops and transforms in specific historical circumstances embodies in its formal dynamics the materialistic basis and purposes. The materialist view of history employed in this study views art and religion, including theology, philosophy and metaphysical systems, as being dependent upon certain specific social dynamics. Hence, what is implicit within this micro study of a relatively inconsequential iconographical configuration amongst the large fund of Brāhmanical art traditions is a theoretical paradigm which has a much larger implication for Indian art as a whole. Such a paradigmatic shift attempted here also incorporates a feminist theoretical frame of reference, particularly with regard to the break up of *śākta* mythological material. In the words of Griselda Pollock, "A paradigm defines the objectives shared within a scientific community, what it aims to research and explain, its procedures and its boundaries. It is the disciplinary matrix."[13]

Fertility and death are the two body tropes used on the female divine in ancient India which provide the themes of sustenance and destruction from the pre-historic time onwards. In the historical period, as evidenced in the classical Sanskrit literature and in the *dharmaśāstra*, women were seen primarily classified into categories like mother, wife, sister and lover. Basically these are the grounds for developing the theme of women as source of sustenance and nourishment. But this sphere of fertility is asserted in contradistinction with the sphere of death and decay asserted through another kind of women images like that Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā. While Mātṛkās as a collective embody these contradictory realms of conception of femininity, they also exemplify the essentialisation process of the social sphere of the female, which finds its reflection upon the divine realm. We have to consider the formation of such archetypal conception as integral to the long historical development of Indian society till the fifth century AD, when the *Śākta* ideology was formulated. Evolution and the constant reinforcement of this ideology through mythic narration and iconic representations falls within the purview of the time frame of this book. Ideology is considered as integral to art[15] and the study of myths offers insights into the social structures. "Mythology, the study of myths, introduces us to new ways of looking at social structures, so that we can examine constants and variables in the organizations of human society, . . ."[16] Myths concerning women illustrate how society viewed women at particular historical points. Goddess myths of Brāhmanical religion are taken as patriarchal constructs. Larrington points out that "authoritative and monolithic readings of women in many Indo-European texts have been established by generations of male scribes and interpreters, . . ."[17] The signs of sexual equality and inequality represented in the myths are considered as reflections of social roles. The constant use of certain archetypal motifs revolving around aspects such as fertility and death, 'autonomous' militant warrior goddess, and goddesses as consorts and mothers, point towards attempts at essentialising the role of the female at the religious realm. This hypothesis would be further explored from the point of view of the historically evolving position of women in society.

A large part of this book present descriptions of the concept and icons of Saptamātṛkās, as these evolve within the Indian cultural history. It is only in the very last chapter a concentrated effort is made to ground the concepts within history, although iconological interpretations meander itself throughout the course of descriptions, almost like a second self.

The first and second chapters are attempts in making a correlation, if there is any, between the invention and evolution of different goddesses, their cultic, mythical and theological rationalisations, so as to locate the different pre-figurations of the aspects of Saptamātṛkās, before they began to be represented in literary narratives and iconic portrayals, around late fourth or early fifth century AD. This, apart from its proposition within the purview of disentangling the different strands of absorption and transformation of various Vedic and non-Vedic pluralistic traditions, also provide data in analyzing the eclectic ideology and synthetic nature of the Purāṇic, neo-Brāhmanic religion. The consideration of the formation of the mainstream Brāhmanical tradition (or the Brāhmanisation process) of the multivalent, and disparate localized systems of the 'people', the '*Lokāyata* cultures', including the tribal heritage, takes into consideration the dialectical evolution of power concentration between different social groups, the ideologically determined collectives and sexes. The last mentioned interpretative direction, is explored at the very end, in the last chapter.

The first chapter presents the earliest instances of the worship of female in India, belonging to the proto-historic period through Vedic and post-Vedic periods. The distinctive, uniform type of standing terracotta female figurines from the Indus Valley sites, in accordance with the universal phenomenon of the fertility worship, is also interpreted in the context of the non-Āryan elements in the later *Śakti* cult. However, the identification of Saptamātṛkā concept, though based on the evidence of the seals depicting seven female figures, is conjectural. Further, within the relatively limited sphere of female goddesses in Vedic literature, Saptamātṛkā concept, if interpreted as *śakti*s of gods, too is a vexed question. From the post-Vedic period onwards, a more concrete, and discernibly distinct sectarian developmental process is taken note off. The worship of the goddess is manifested as a major cult, along with the *Śaiva* and the *Vaiṣṇava* denominations, before and during the age of the Guptas, evident from various literary and archaeological sources and has been dealt in great detail by several scholars. The study of the origin and development of *Śakti* cult enable us to locate the origin of the Mātṛkā concept. The various epithets of goddesses, noticed in the later Vedic literature can be classified as belonging either to the sphere of militant goddess or to the motherly, fertility realms. This has enabled the identification of some of the latent aspects of Mātṛkā concept. In terms of continuity of ideas, the third chapter dealing with the definition of the concept of Saptamātṛkās is linked to the first.

The impetus for the inception and development of the Saptamātṛkā concept has been derived from the sectarian *Śakti* cult. The book attempts to identify the diverse sources that condition the *Śākta* cult which are equally applicable to the composite fabric of Mātṛkā tradition. The most important element amongst these as far as the latter is concerned, is the pre-Gupta Bālagraha beliefs. These can be defined as the worship of the personified spirits to the conception, birth, diseases and protection of children. The sculptural tradition of Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā can be described as the stage of assimilation of a variety of concepts related to Mātṛkās, in varying contexts. As a result, there is a multiplicity of differing, yet interrelated manifestations. The Bālagraha tradition with the pantheon of Skanda and the female spirits, Harineigameṣin and the female counterpart, Śrī Lakṣmī, Hāritī and Kubera are all significant components in this multifaceted phenomenon. Whereas literary evidence imply historically significant conflicts and resolution between Brāhmanical and heterogeneous non-Brāhmanical ideologies, the sculptural evidence indicates the already resolved Brāhmanical status of this tradition in the Kuṣāṇa period. Obviously, these have the bearing upon the acculturisation of *Lokāyata* traditions. However widely distinct the cultic import may be, iconographically the traditions of the Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkās and the later Purāṇic Saptamātṛkās are welded together, enabling a study of the processes of incorporation of the former into the latter. Elements such as the goddesses in a group, the emphasis on the maternal and the protective aspects, the co-existence of benevolence and malevolence, are common to both the traditions. The second chapter discusses the Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkās.

The formative stage of Saptamātṛkā cult unfold at the end of Kuṣāṇa period and during the Gupta period. The third chapter is an attempt in defining the conception of Saptamātṛkās proper, in the light of literary and inscriptional data during and after the Gupta period.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters deal entirely with the Saptamātṛkā iconography. The sculptures of Mātṛkās, hailing from Badoh-Pathari, Udayagiri and Besnagar in central India, Samalaji and Tanesara in western India, and Aihole and Elephanta in Deccan, bring forth early stages of experimentation with the basic tenets of Mātṛkā iconography, namely the maternal and warrior aspects. The fourth chapter concerns itself with the distinct typologies that were evolved at distant regional centres. The pace of the change in conflating the maternal and warrior aspects in icons is rapid from the mid-sixth century AD. Along with this a certain iconographical fixation, namely the order, the number, the attributes and the *vāhana*s of Mātṛkās, also set in. The fifth and the sixth chapters delineate the varied regional traditions of Saptamātṛkā iconography up till around mid-ninth century.

In the course of the research, the implication in analyzing the relative artistic autonomy as against the interdependence of a particular regional centre with the other, became clear. This has its basis on the stylistic considerations as well as on the invention and evolution of newer iconographic typologies and particular formal usages within different regions. The creation of new iconographic types is taken as basis for considering relative autonomy of a particular school or region. The instances of mutual interaction and cross-breeding of art styles and iconographic forms have significance while considering the general development of Indian art. This book disposes the notion of a single centre and many interdependent regional centres. The simultaneous development of distinct Mātṛkā iconographic types in western India, central India, Deccan, south and eastern India justifies the working-out of same ideas differently in distinct sculptural schools. It is probable that the ideas, concepts and their purposes have greater commonality and interconnectedness, than the formal aspects of the sculptural imagery as such. Probably this is due to the greater momentum the ideas have had, than the formal aspects of art.

The book considers stylistic phases and iconographical stages as concomitant to each other and considers them together in determining the dates and chronological order of sculptures, that are without any inscriptional or other data. In such circumstances the only method that can be employed in constructing the evolutionary stages of sculptures, even at the risk of being tentative, is on the basis of formal and stylistic qualities, which is bound to have its own limitations. Apart from the above, the book, however, also considers the iconographical stages in the evolution as an important tool in determining the dates and chronology. At the same time, the attempt here excludes the possibility of short dating the sculptures and the intention is to provide a relatively larger time duration comprising a quarter or even half of a century.

Generally, the earlier studies on iconography consider the details of visualization of an image as a fixed norm, presumed to have been followed by the artist-craftsman as a standardized method of representation. In the course of the book, it became apparent that the iconographical ideas go through evolutionary processes and hardly ever get standardized or become a universally applicable norm. Further, one observes specific regional preferences in the methods of visualization and a great variety and flux. An iconological shift, in logical terms may reflect the changing theological rationalisations on the one hand, (since working, re-working and modifications in these areas are a constant feature), and on the other exemplify the ingenuity of the sculptors in inventing ever new permeables within the given ideas. These could also imply an aspect of art, the attempts in achieving perfect form in relation to the theme, function and many physical conditions, such as the quality of the material, etc. What is signified in the title as 'Storied Icons', apart from suggesting the resolutions of socio-political conflicts, also imply these as well; the conditions that mould, re-mould and alter the artistic form at a given historical time and space. The attempt in the book, thus, is also to specify those points in the flux, which reflect artist's imagination.

The concluding chapter deals with the meanings of the icons within the general framework of historical continuum of ancient India, contexualising and grounding the former within the politico-social and economic dialectics.

Textual Sources

A few words about the textual sources would be appropriate at this point.[18] The primary textual sources used comprise of the Vedic literature, *Sūtra*s, *Dharma* and *Artha Śāstra*s, *Mahābhārata, Purāṇa*s, medical treatises like *Caraka Saṁhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*, *Nāṭaka*s and *Śilpa Śāstra*s. Various texts of the four sections of *Veda-Saṁhitā, Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad*s (1200 to 400 BC) are relevant to the book for providing evidence of the growth of the cult of the goddess. The Vedic source materials also enable us to trace the possible sources for the study of the

Saptamātṛkā prototypes. The period of *Ṛg Saṁhitā*, the earliest Vedic text, is generally agreed upon as composed between 1200 and 900 BC. The other three *Saṁhitā*s belong to a period roughly between 1000 and 700 BC. The date of *Brāhmaṇa* texts are accepted as belonging to a period between 800 and 500 BC. *Āraṇyaka*s and *Upaniṣad*s were composed between 700 and 400 BC. *Upaniṣads — Aitareya*, part of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Kena* and *Taittirīya* belong to the early period, while *Upaniṣad*s like *Kaṭha, Muṇḍuka*, *Śvetāśvatara* and *Māṇḍūkya* are later. The composition of the *Sūtra*s considered to have occurred between 600 and 200 BC.

While the *Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇa* (200 BC to AD 200) is totally silent about Mātṛkās, copious information regarding Mātṛkās is found in the *Mahābhārata* (400 BC to AD 300). In the chapters, *Vanaparva* and *Śalyaparva*, Mātṛkās are cited generally as *Mātarāḥ* or *Mātṛgaṇāḥ*, in the context of birth, *abhiṣeka* and marriage of Skanda. Of the two different accounts, *Vanaparva* is considered to be older than *Śalyaparva.* References in the aforementioned portions of the text are of great value in throwing light on the Bālagraha tradition of Kuṣāṇa period. Similar is the relevance of *āyurvedic* treatises. The texts, *Suśruta Saṁhitā, Caraka Saṁhitā, Kāśyapa Saṁhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya,* dated to Kuṣāṇa and Gupta periods, contain important information regarding Bālagrahas. *Suśruta Saṁhitā,* considered to be the earliest, is the first text which contains the iconographical descriptions of Bālagrahas.

The association of Mātṛkās with the Bālagraha beliefs is also found in *Purāṇa*s. *Kumārikā Khaṇḍa* of *Skanda Purāṇa, Vāmana Purāṇa, Agni Purāṇa* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, preserve copious references, regarding the female Bālagrahas and Skanda. *Matsya Purāṇa, Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, *Padma Purāṇa*, *Kūrma Purāṇa*, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Brahma Purāṇa, Liṅga Purāṇa* and also the *Revākhaṇḍa* of *Skanda Purāṇa,* bring forth the association of Śiva with the Mātṛkās. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Vāmana Purāṇa, Devī Bhāgavata,* etc., trace the origin of Saptamātṛkās, Yoginīs and Ḍākinīs from Caṇḍikā, Durgā or Gaurī. The various accounts in the *Purāṇa*s, if read together, suggest an evolution and assimilation and thus one can see the gradual widening of the Mātṛkā worship. The whole of this process ranges roughly between the Kuṣāṇa period and the medieval times.

General, but significant, information regarding the prevalence of Mātṛkā worship, has also been derived form the classical Sanskrit literature. Dramas, for example, *Daridra Cārudatta* ascribed to Bhāsa, *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Śūdraka, *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, depict situations in the narrative contexts, relating to Mātṛkā-worship and rituals associated with them, which suggest their widespread popular worship and relate the rites performed in their honour. Besides, *Nāṭya-Śāstra* of Bharatamuni also recommends the worship of Mātṛkās. Referred to as *Nāṭya Mātā*s, they occur in the rituals connected with the preparation and consecration of the playhouse and the stage.

Some of the *Purāṇa*s like *Matsya Purāṇa, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* also contain iconographic descriptions of Mātṛkās. *Bṛhat Saṁhitā* of Varāhamihira (last quarter of the 5th century AD) contain references to the Mātṛkās, who are mentioned collectively as *Mātṛgaṇāḥ*.

The *Śilpa Śāstras*, like *Aparājitapṛcchā, Rūpamaṇḍana* and *Mānasollāsa* contain iconographical prescriptions of the Mātṛkā images. Further *Āgamas* like *Aṁśumadbhedāgama, Suprabhedāgama* and *Ruruvakarṇāgama,* also contain iconographical injunction for making Mātṛkā images.

References

1. V.V. Bhide, *A Concise Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, first edn., Chitra Shala Press, Poona City, 1926, p. 868.
2. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi, 1963, p. 804.
3. *Ṛgveda*,VII. 41.4.
4. V.V. Bhide, *op.cit.*
5. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *op.cit.* p. 807, e.g. *mṛga mātṛkā* in plural would mean all kinds of dear.
6. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 2 vols. in 4 parts, Madras, 1914.
7. J.N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1941.
8. Katherine Anne Harper, *Seven Hindu Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation, The Iconography of the Saptamatrkas*, New York, 1989.
9. Refer Chapter 7 for definition.
10. Sukumari Bhattacharji, *The Indian Theogony*, Calcutta, 1978, p. 362.
11. Wendy D. O'Flaherty defines consorts thus, "Consorts, though literally denoting a partner or spouse, is a heavily loaded term, for the consort is usually implied to be a mere appendage, far inferior in power and status to his or her spouse . . . . In divine hierogamies in India, one of the partners is generally a mere consort, far 'less equal' than the other. In several significant cases,the stronger partner is the woman, who is a full goddess of the female angler-fish type; in others, the woman is a mere mortal who expresses, through her joyful subservience to her better half, the theological stance of the worshipper before the god." "The Shifting Balance of Power in the Marriage of Śiva and Pārvati", in *The Divine Consort*, Edited by John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff, Delhi, 1984.
12. R. Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image", in S. Heath (ed.), *Image-Music Text*, London, Fontana, 1977.
13. Freely paraphrased from M. Schapiro, "On the Nature of Abstract Art", in *Marxist Quarterly*, January-March 1937, pp. 77-78.
14. Griselda Pollock, *Vision & Difference*, London, 1992, p. 2.
15. "Art is constitutive of ideology; it is not merely an illustration of it. It is one of the social practices through which particular views of the world, definitions and identities for us to live are constructed, reproduced, and even redefined." *Ibid.*, p. 30.
16. Carolyne Larrington, *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, London, 1992, p. ix.
17. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
18. The approximate dates suggested for the various religious texts are based on the schema of dates followed by Sukumari Bhattacharji. ***See** op.cit.*, pp. 18-20. The dates suggested for the texts of *āyurveda*, and other secular literature derive from various sources and are tentative.

1

Mātṛkā Prototypes-I

THIS chapter deals with archaeological and textual materials deriving from the distinct cultural spheres of ancient India, between the proto-historic and the late Vedic times, (*ca.* mid 3rd millennium BC to *ca.* 5th century BC) with a view to locate multiple aspects of the divine feminine therein. This involves explorations into evidences of three distinct cultural periods, namely those of Indus Valley, Vedic, and post-Vedic. The inquiry is broad based, and yet specific, so as to facilitate the identification of the possible invisible threads that link the later Saptamātṛkā concept and the varied traditions of ancient mother goddesses. The methodology inevitably involves reviewing and examining previous researches and conclusions. The concern of the earlier studies largely had been in arriving at conclusions regarding the specific nature of mother goddess worship and its relative importance during these periods. Significant attempts at tracing the possible prototypes of the Saptamātṛkās have also been already undertaken. While these remain reviewed here, further interpretational possibilities are being explored.

The Divine Female and Proto-Saptamātṛkā in Indus Valley Culture

The evidences are conclusive in ascertaining the prevalence of the ritual-bound worship of the divine female in the Indus Valley culture. While she is the presiding deity of the source of life, the conclusions regarding the prevalence of the Saptamātṛkā concept therein, if defined precisely from the premise of the Purāṇic concept, is an over-reading and hence awaits to be contested. Before taking up this specific point for analysis it is necessary to consider the general context.

One of the major limitations in studying the Indus Valley culture and art is the undeciphered script. Hence, except for the possibility of certain general conclusions, any attempt at inferring the specific meaning of the sculptures remain inconclusive. Similarly, problems regarding the precise nature of the relationship between Indus Valley civilization and the Vedic culture, leave us with little scope for definite conclusions. The older viewpoint considers the two cultures as distinct and autonomous, designating the former as Dravidian and aboriginal and the latter as Āryan and foreign. However, the nature of their contact, particularly in war, remains a matter of speculation. However, there is a general agreement on the conclusion that people of the Indus Valley were agrarian, matriarchal and thus also primarily worshippers of the mother-goddess, and the Āryans on the other hand are considered to have been pastoral, patriarchal and primarily appeased male nature deities of consequence.

Inconclusively though, the other approach links the two cultures as having a very close relationship and affiliation or even as belonging to one and the same cultural matrix. Such a methodology presumes that the archaeological remains of the Indus Valley and the information contained in Vedic literary sources are mutually corroborative. Elaboration upon the details of these distinct perspectives, would not be of relevance to the present study. However, in recent years, a few scholars have employed the latter approach, in interpreting the meaning of the artistic manifestations of the Indus Valley.[1] In relation to these questions, the specific aspects of the goddess and the so-called proto-Saptamātṛkās are discussed below.

Altogether four seals having representations of seven figures and one with six figures from Indus Valley sites have come to the notice of scholars.[2] Among these, one example from Mohenjo-Daro is most significant and intact[3] (*Pl.* 1). On the right upper half of the seal a horned deity stands erect frontally between the branches of a *pīpal* tree, evident from the shape of the leaves. Around the tree on the ground is a circularly raised pedestal. On the lower left of the tree a partitioned square diagram is delineated. Near the tree, on the right, is a figure with similar horned head-dress, seated in a cross-legged posture bending forward with the raised arms extended towards the tree and the figure inside. On the further right side, standing behind the kneeling persona is an enormous composite animal. A few pictographic symbols, including that of a fish is represented in the space above the animal. In the lower register of the seal are the seven standing erect figures dressed in short skirts, tall head-dress and braided hair. These figures as well as the deity standing between the branches of the tree seems to be wearing many bangles. Harper who has looked at all the five seals carefully maintains that they are essentially similar, where the seven figures are shown in conjunction with a U-shaped tree with a spirit figure inside.[4] However, the other representations are highly worn out to elaborate on any comparable points.

Attempts at interpretations and drawing correlations with varied anthropological, art historical and religious materials to these have been many, although the discernment of gender of the concerned figures in the representation itself remains a fact of probability due to the lack of distinct physiognomic details. According to Sir John Marshall, "The nude deity appearing between the branches is very small and roughly portrayed, but the absence of any evidence of a male sex coupled with the fact that tree deities in India are usually females, and that the ministrant figures on this seal also appear to be women, ... The seven figures in line at the bottom are taken to be female officiants or ministrants of the goddess."[5] With regard to the seven figures Ernest Mackay observes that, these figures, the mystical seven in number, recall the small-pox goddess Śītalā and her six sisters.[6] Dhavalikar conclusively identifies these figures as the earliest plastic representation of Saptamātṛkās and draws an analogy to the water deities — *sāt apsaras* of the villages of Maharashtra.[7] Herbert P. Sullivan compares them with the seven Canarese Māri Goddesses, the seven *Rāṇimārs* or virgins of Tamil Nadu and other groups of seven goddesses of present-day folk cultures.[8]

According to Pupul Jayakar the " Yakṣī wearing buffalo horns of magic stands within the *aśvattha* or *pīpal* tree trunk is like *garbha yantra*, the womb vessel. At the base on the tree a circle is drawn around the tree trunk, the *Śrīcakra* the mark and alter of the goddess".[9] Pupul Jayakar opines that the seven figures may be the seven virgins of the present-day rural symbology; the vegetal and water nymphs found throughout India, the *sāt saheliān* of the northern river valley, the *sapta-kannigai* of Tamil Nadu, the *sāt āsara* of Maharashtra, who are invoked at times of drought. Regarding the fish represented above the composite animal the scholar observes that, the fish is a recurrent female symbol of the aphrodisiacal and later identified with *bhaga,* the symbol of female generative organ. The composite animal is considered as goat, a symbol of the potent male and the downward thrusting fish in conjunction establishes the sexual nature of the imagery and links to the rites of union, birth and transformation.[10] Jayakar imagines whether the magician priest is engaged in the worship of the Yakṣī inside the tree-shaped like an womb vessel, as an alchemist seer doing *tapas* for the key to transformation and metamorphosis.[11] However, the relationship between this and the so-called seven water nymphs in the depiction has not been considered.

As against the above views and that of the suggestion of the seven figures being sacrificial victims to be offered to the deity in the tree,[12] Buddha Prakash quoting Ṛgvedic passage[13] and the Vedic visualization of the process of creation and its manifestation into seven categories,[14] identifies the seven figures as representing the seven-fold system of creation. Further, considering that the seven figures occupy the lower half of the seal, while the upper half consists of the three figures of Aja, Akṣara and Kṣara, notes that the seven sons of the creator Vispati are called the seven sons of the half in *Ṛgveda*[15] implicating that one half of the creative process assumes the material form and the other half remains transcendent. Quoting V.S. Agrawala,[16] the scholar further interprets the long braids of hair in the figures as the element which represents the refuse thrown out by a living organism, suggesting the undergoing of the creative process. K.N. Sastri reads the seven figures as composite, human in the upper part of their body and avian in the lower while drawing analogy with the bird-men of the Sumerian mythology identifies the depiction as that of seven Maruts; the Vedic storm gods who are the followers of the Āryan warlord Indra.[17] M.K. Dhavalikar referring to the heptads in the *Ṛgveda*, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* and the *Mahābhārata* considers the seven goddesses as the proto-Saptamātṛkās and an evidence suggestive of a certain Āryan element in the Harappan civilization. Deciphering the narrative as the ceremony of pressing Soma by Agni (the former standing between the *soma* plant presiding over, the latter kneeling down engaged in the preparation along with his ram *vāhana* standing behind) the seven figures as Saptasindhu mother goddesses; the seven sacred rivers, preparing the *soma* juice. These water deities are further corroborated by the evidences from contemporary folk religion.[18]

The attempt at the interpretation regarding the aspects of proto-Saptamātṛkā in the Indus Valley culture will have to necessarily take into consideration the larger context of the belief system and worship of female divinities in particular and the aspects of its religion in general. Apart from inconclusive disagreements,[19] evidences prove the belief system and the practices related to the fecunding agricultural magic which essentially took cognizance of the productive interdependence of male and female principles in nature.

Particularly on the basis of the neolithic type of female figurines there exist a general consensus upon the prevalence of the goddess-worship in the Indus Valley culture. Sir John Marshall observes that, except for the few exceptional examples of female figures represented with children or in the state of pregnancy, the majority of the figures of the fertility goddess are of a very distinctive and uniform type.[20] These standing and almost nude figures with prominent breasts, have girdles around the loin and fan-shaped head-dress with pannier-like side projections. S.R. Rao points out that the Mother-Goddess cult which was very popular in the Indus Valley was relatively less known in Kathiawar and Rajasthan.[21] Irene Gajjar points out that the terracotta tradition of Indus Valley, as regards its relationship with western cultures, shows evidence of fundamental links especially with reference to the Mother-Goddess cult.[22] The scholar further points out that the Indus Valley statuettes on the whole are typical and unaffiliated with occidental counterparts. The Indus Valley female figures have elaborate ornaments and head-dress and are more pleasant in appearance than the bird-like figurines or the morbid hooded Zob statuettes and are generally dissimilar from their Mesopotamian counterparts.[23]

Historically the evolution of Mother-Goddess cult beginning with the Old Stone Age is almost complete in the Bronze Age.[24] The images of Mother-Goddess from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Aegean coast and Indus Valley point out the wide prevalence of this cult. "There is a similarity in the finds of the cult object of Indus Valley and in western counterpart which suggest possible similar beliefs and similar religion."[25] Sumerians deified Mother Earth in different forms, as Nin-tu (the lady who give birth), Nin-makh (the exalted queen) or Nin-khursag, etc., besides, Enlil, god of the Air.[26] "In Mesopotamia, Mother Earth was the inexhaustible source of new life as evident in Inana and Ishtar. Inana as the embodiment of creative source stood in the same relation to Dumuzi as did Ishtar to Tammuz, the young god who personified the autumnal decline in Seasonal Cycle."[27]

Marshall designates her as the 'Mother' or the 'Great Mother', the prototype of power (*prakṛti*) which developed into that of *Śakti* in India.[28] Her representations are the *grāmadevatās* who are the personifications of the same power.[29] The non-Āryan origin of the *Śakti* cult is exemplified by the prevalence of goddesses among the primitive tribes and by the fact that the leading part in their rituals and ceremonies are performed, not by brāhmaṇa but by low caste Pariahas, members of some of the old tribes.[30] Relating the Indus Valley mother goddess and the present-day village deities Mackay points out that, "in India today she is the guardian of the house and village, presides over child-birth and taking a more human interest in their needs, is altogether closer to her worshippers than any of the recognized Hindu gods".[31]

The propitiation of the earth goddess in connection with human sacrifice is evident in a seal from Harappa. On one side of the seal a nude female figure is represented with legs drawn apart. (*Pl.* 2) A plant with five leaves is shown emerging from the womb of the goddess. " The earth is the great *yoni*. The woman's body in the Indus Valley seal is the earthbound root, the fecundating source."[32] On the reverse side of the seal is a man holding a sickle-shaped knife, and a woman seated on the ground in an attitude of supplication. (*Pl.* 3) Here we find a picture of primitive agricultural ritual consisting of the ceremonial killing of a member of the community, and the distribution of his or her flesh among the people, and the scattering of a portion of it in the fields with a view to increasing the fecundity of the tribe and the fertility of the soil.[33] Scholars quote instances of human sacrifice for magically fertilizing the earth as prevalent among different tribal communities. However, Marshall points out the close parallelism of this image of the goddess with the later sculptures of Aditi Uttānapāda, wherein the legs of the goddess are much in the same posture, but with a lotus issuing from her neck, instead of the plant issuing from the womb.[34]

The particular aspect in relation to the female divinity that becomes apparent in the light of this seal is the connection between the fecundity ritual and the life generating earth goddess. Whether or not this goddess was identical to the archetypally consistent Great Mother images of Indus Valley culture can only be a matter of probability. However, it can be safely concluded that the earliest manifestation of the concept of the female deity in India had the essential aspect of originating from agricultural ritual. E.O. James pointing out the antiquity of Mother Goddess worship maintains that "clearly it was an essential element very deeply ingrained in the long and complex history of the body of beliefs and practices which emerged in and around the mysterious process of fecundity, birth and generation, alike in nature, the human species and in animal kingdom."[35]

E.O. James points out that whether or not the goddess who presided over the mystery of birth and concomitants had a male counterpart as a son and partner cannot be determined from the available evidence.[36] However, the presence of the phallic and ring stones at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro positively indicate the prevalence of the concept of interconnected male/female principle at least in the ritualistic realm. There is no dearth of evidence to establish the antiquity of phallic worship in India among the non-Āryan cultures as pointed out by Marshall.[37] The several ring stones or stone disks found at Taxila, Rupar, Murtazigang, Kausambi and other sites of Mauryan period with the representation of Goddesses and various symbols in relation to fertility aspect indicate their magical meanings and ritualistic import.[38] This may thus direct us to believe the practice of *yoni* and *liṅga* worship among the Indus people. Yet, it is difficult to ascertain whether the terracotta Mother Goddess is a virgin mother or a consort.

Two distinct yet mutually complementary theoretical framework can be employed fruitfully in explaining the *raison d'être* of the female divinity at Indus culture. The first bases itself on the changing economic conditions, and therefore, its reflection upon the shifting social domination of sexes. The hypothesis is based on reflection theory which maintains that the relative superiority of the sexes in the production of the immediate material subsistence, forms the foundation upon which religion and art evolve. Hence where women held a superior position than men, in the economic life, the worship of mother-goddess evolved. Accordingly the emergence of male deities relates itself to the hunting and pastoral stages of social development.[39] Thus, "the original pre-hunting stage was characterized by mother-right".[40] With the invention of the spear, hunting became men's task followed by domestication of animals and the social supremacy was shifted to the male. On the other hand, food gathering leading eventually to the cultivation of seeds in plots adjacent to the settlements, became the domain of women. The initial stage of agriculture witnessed the social superiority of women and in the clan-life where the mother is the head of the group, the Mother-Goddess assumed supreme position. "In the post-hunting stage, among those peoples that developed the pastoral economy the male supremacy came to exercise even greater hold; among those, however, that discovered agriculture, the situation was reversed. There was a revival of mother-right among them. With the further development of agriculture, more specifically, with the introduction of the cattle-drawn plough to the field, this agricultural mother-right was finally overthrown."[41]

Considering the origin of Tāntric tradition which has its supreme emphasis on *prakṛti* or the female principle, and as distinct from the Vedic tradition with its primacy given to male, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya argues for the great antiquity of mother-right in India quoting several cases of matriarchal survivals among the tribal population. Establishing a strong matriarchal character of the pre-Āryan Indus Valley relics and the pre-eminent position of goddess among the tribal and peasant population,[42] and the survivals of tribal past as an important characteristic of the traditional Indian society, Chattopadhyaya argues these and agricultural magic as the original sources for Vāmācāra or Tāntrism. Since women were the original cultivators, the religious rites intended to secure the fertility of the fields were naturally within the special competence of the women.[43] "Later, in order to adjust the religions to the patriarchal conditions, these functions began to be transferred to men. Even then, the male as male could not discharge these. They could become priests only by changing their sex to that of females."[44] This last point will be found most valuable while considering the concept of Purāṇic Saptamātṛkās.

The primitive agricultural magic is explained from the premise of the essential identification of the reproductive capacity of the female body and the plant producing potential of the earth.[45] Thus, this reciprocal assimilation remained continuously translated upon the female body and its worship throughout India's past, beginning, if not earlier, from the Indus Valley civilization. D. Chattopadhyaya quoting *Devī-Māhātmya* passage[46] pertinently designates the epithet *Śākaṁbarī*[47] to the plant generating deity on the oblong seal and notes the connection of the female deity (?) within the plant in the so-called depiction of proto-Saptamātṛkās.

The other view-point essentially relates the phenomenon to the properties and conditions of human psychic. In the parlance of Jungian analytical psychology, "the primordial image or the archetype of the 'Great Mother', does not refer to any concrete image existing in space and time, but to an inward image in the human psyche. The symbolic expression of this psychic phenomenon is to be found in the figures of the Great Goddess represented in the myths and artistic creation of mankind. The effect of this archetype may be followed through the whole of history, for we can demonstrate its working in the rites, myths, symbols of early man and also in the dreams, fantasies and creative works of the sane as well as the sick man of our own days".[48] Further, "the archetypal image of the Great Mother lives in the individual as in the group, in man as well as the woman. When therefore we say that the partriarchal world, we are not referring to a sequence of sociological structures, such as that set up by Bachofen".[49] Thus according to this approach, both male and female are vehicles of the archetype, regardless of whether the society is matriarchal or patriarchal.[50]

One of the aspects inherent in the structure of mother archetype as analyzed by Erich Neumann, and significant in the context of present study is the distinction he draws between the positive and the negative elementary characters of the primordial goddess. In the images of the mother goddess, belonging to the Paleolithic period, the symbolism of rounded vessel predominates. "The belly and the breasts, the latter of them gigantic, are like central region of this feminine vessel, the 'sole-reality'."[51] "At the centre of the elementary character in which the woman contains and protects, nourishes and gives birth, stands the vessel, which is both attribute and symbol of the feminine nature".[52] "Body vessel and mother . . . spring from the most intimate personal experience, from an experience that is eternally human", whereas "the negative elementary character originates in inner experience, and the anguish, horror, and fear of danger that the Archetypal Feminine signifies cannot be derived form any actual and evident attributes of women."[53] The co-existence of both these aspects in a given society is a universal phenomenon.[54]

The attempt at singling out the prototypes of the specific goddess of the later period, from among the images of goddesses found from the Indus Valley is of primary importance to the present study. As observed above, the independent images of the mother goddess, the ring stones in association with the phallic stones, and the plant generating goddess in relation to human sacrifice and fecundity, have a significant bearing upon the manifold developments in the goddess cult of historic times. Concomitant with these, in the Śaivaite context, is the so-called Paśupati seal, identified as proto-Śiva. In relation with these, the limitation of the identification of proto-Saptamātṛkā is specific. It is to be conceded that none of the above discussion in exact terms aid us in knowing the exact meaning of the presence of the seven figures in the seals of Indus Valley. Within the limited knowledge that is possible about the Indus Valley religion it seems impossible to prove the presence of proto-Saptamātṛkā concept from among the available materials; that is if we precisely define the meaning of these Brāhmanical goddesses, on the basis of Purāṇic accounts.

Harper's attempt at correlating the motifs like the tree, horn, fish, etc. of this seal with Paleo-Mediterranean symbols in order to trace their common meanings stand valid, yet fails to establish any particular significance with regard to its assigned status of being proto-Saptamātṛkās.[55] The inadequate thesis with general implication regarding the possibility of corroborating the origin of Brāhmanical Saptamātṛkās with the data of the aboriginal inhabitants and autochthonous practices, evidences of which are derived from the contemporary folk and tribal cultures, may be considered at a later context.[56]

At the same time the instances of the presence of the collective of seven female(?) figures could possibly be identified as proto-*grāmamātṛkā*s, primarily linked with water, vegetation and fecundating rituals, and as such not having anything specifically in common with the Brāhmanical Saptamātṛkās of the *Purāṇa*. Apart from depicting seven female figures, each of these seals also portray a plant in association with them. In one of the examples the plant can possibly be the *pīpal*. This tree in most parts of India even today is regarded as sacred and many beliefs and rituals are associated with it. Women who wish to conceive male children, or seek other kind of wish fulfilment, circumambulate and tie cotton thread around the trunk of this tree. The seven female figures in association with certain ritual related to this tree could be due to the association of *grāmamātṛkā*s with water; since these motifs are the cause and effect of fertility, water being the basic fertilizing source and plant being the product.

Further a close stylistic similarity also can be observed in these representations of these goddesses of the Indus Valley seals and the present-day delineations of them in the metal amulets, and terracotta plaques in the rural societies in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The Divine Feminine and the Female Heptads in Vedic Tradition

The following quotation clearly delineates the place of goddesses in the *Veda*s. "Goddesses occupy a very subordinate position in Vedic beliefs and worship. They play hardly any part as rulers of the world. The only one of any importance is Uṣas, who judged by the statistical standard ranks as deity of the third class. But, unlike nearly all the gods, she received no share in the *soma* offering. Next to her comes Sarasvatī, who however, only ranks with the lowest class of deities . . . Pṛthvī, hardly separable form Dyaus, is praised in one short *sūkta* of three stanzas. *Rātri*, Night, is also invoked in one hymn. . . . . Goddesses as wives of the Great Gods, similarly play an insignificant part in the *Veda*s. They are altogether without independent character, simply representing the spouses whom such gods as Indra must have had. Hardly anything about them is mentioned but their names, which are simply formed from those of the gods with the feminine suffix *-āṇī*. Thus Indrāṇī is simply wife of Indra. Vāruṇī and Āgneyī also occur in the *Ṛgveda*, but rarely. Rudrāṇī is not found till the *sūtra*s, but she plays a decidedly more important part in the cult than any of the other goddess in *-āṇī*."[57]

There are no two opinions regarding the minor place of goddesses in the Vedic literature. If considered in the context of the prominent male gods in Vedic pantheon, all supreme and powerful, the secondary status of the goddesses provide us only a limited possibility for the identification of the prefiguration of the Saptamātṛkās or that of the concept of *śakti*. Since *Veda* primarily contain hymns for ritual use and has hardly any detailed narrative of myth, what we can gather of the incipient goddesses tradition necessarily depends upon the flickers of the concepts of divinities, defined essentially as personifications of the phenomenal world and the various physical forces therein. Within this, female divinities do feature, including the myths, where they are invariably in close familial relation with the male divinities, as mothers, wives or sisters.

The lack of any major divine feminine conception in the *Veda* can positively be read as a feature of direct reflection of the material basis of Vedic culture. Scholars unanimously agree upon the pastoral economic life of Āryans. "Only barley is plated, and at the time of the hymns agriculture as yet played only a small part . . . . In the most extravagant expressions cows and bullocks are praised as the most precious possessions".[58] The pastoral economic base and the patriarchal social system thus explain the subordinate status of the goddesses in the Vedic pantheon. However, while making such generalizations it is necessary to keep in view, as pointed out by Emily Kearns that, "Although, in contrast to later Hinduism, the pickings from the *Veda*s for a mythology of women are scanty, we should bear in mind the possible limitations of the material. It must be significant that so few hymns are addressed to goddesses, but it may be that important aspects of the religious belief and practice of the time were excluded from 'official' texts."[59]

Before pursuing the question of the significance of the concept of heptads in the *Veda*, consideration of certain general characteristics of the Vedic anthropomorphism may be useful. The Devas or the 'Shining Ones', Indra, Varuṇa, Agni, etc. are the anthropomorphic conceptions of various natural elements. Yet, "the degree of anthropomorphism exhibited by the Vedic deities is extremely variable. In some cases the active element is constantly present, and the view taken may be set down as almost animistic: the waters are indeed goddesses, but they are also wholesome to drink; the goddess Dawn bares her bosom like a beautiful maiden; but there is comparison here rather than identity, and, if in some cases the goddess seems to be considered as one who appears morn after morn to men, in others each separate dawn is a fresh divinity. *Sūrya*, the Sun, by his rising is born as the child of the sky; the constant presence of the actual deity prevents any real development of anthropomorphism. The same consideration affects Agni, who never appears as a god disconnected from his element of fire: when he is hidden in the waters or in the clouds, it is as fire: as a messenger of men he is the fire of the sacrifice flaming up to heavens to bring gods and men together".[60]

The narrow possibility of enumerating upon the specific forerunners of later goddess, including Saptamātṛkās, within the divine sphere of *Veda,* need not however detain us from citing instances of latent interconnections. The ambivalence of the benign and malevolent aspects in the conception of Saptamātṛkās can be traced back to the Vedic distinction of the goddesses Aditi and Nirṛti or Uṣas and Rātri. Though no separate hymn is devoted to Aditi, she is a prominent goddess, who appears as the mother of solar gods.[61] The dark night, Nirṛti, is personified as a Mother-Goddess iṇ *Atharvaveda* representing misfortune, corruption, decay and destruction.[62] In *Ṛgveda* she is mentioned twelve times as a goddess of disease, dissolution, and as presiding over death.[63] Aditi's importance gradually disappears after the *Ṛgveda*, though she persists as a mother goddess in the epics and the *Purāṇa*s. S.K. Dikshit observes that, in the Purāṇic texts, Umā is identical with Aditi.[64] According to Sukumari Bhattacharji, "the earliest antecedents of Pārvatī connect her with Aditi and Nirṛti — the heaven mother and the earth mother respectively, as also the benevolent and malevolent aspects of the primitive Mother Goddess, and throughout her entire career she retained this duality, the emphasis on the benign or malignant traits varying regionally."[65] The familial link is stressed in all the cases where feminine divinities figure-in in the Vedic materials, except in the case of Indra's messenger Saramā. Her enigmatic personality as it appears in the hymn in *Ṛgveda*[66] portrays her as the messenger of the God to a group of demons who have stolen his cattle. To quote, "the use of a female figure to overcome demons by indirect means (trickery or persuasion) anticipates later mythological motifs."[67]

From among Vedic sources what appears to be of primary significance to the Saptamātṛkās, is the symbology of heptads. This numerical prefiguration is very often found in *Ṛgveda*, and must be considered distinctly as a typical sacred number.[68] The numerical fixation of the Purāṇic Mātṛkās as a group of seven goddesses is linked fundamentally to the Vedic predilection for the number seven. The phenomenal universe of the Vedic Āryans consisted of septapartite distinct units of an indivisible totality. These are, the universe consisting of seven regions, (*saptadiśa*)[69] each having seven Ādityas.[70] In the ritual of *Yajurveda* the number seven is found at a time when the number twelve was normally accepted for the Āditya. Similarly the chariot of Sūrya is referred to as being drawn by seven horses or seven mares.[71]

The world consist of seven communities,[72] seven domestic animals, seven wild animals,[73] seven domestic plants and seven wild plants,[74] and seven senses.[75] In *Ṛgveda* ancient seers are represented by a definite group of seven.[76] They sang prayers composed of seven meters, (*saptachandāsmi*),[77] having seven syllables (*saptaream bhavati*)[78] and seven notes.[79] In certain sacrifices seven altars were constructed, (*saptacitikognih̤*)[80] and altars had seven layers of brick.[81] Demons are counted in the groups of seven,[82] and gods are five times seven.[83] Thus, the numerical fixation on seven is pervasive in the Vedic literature, and indicate sacred, mystical and auspicious associations.

The concern with the sacred number seven is not unique to Vedic religion alone. While making note of such instances among Babylonians, Greeks and Hebrews, K. Harper enquires as to why it was extensively used for auspicious purpose throughout Indian history.[84] To quote, "Certain natural phenomena were perceived by ancient to be in the units of seven and this perception had an influence on the formation of mythological structure. . . Ancient Indian mystics, from observing natural phenomena, may have recognized the existence of a sevenfold universal law or cosmic rhythm. They would, therefore, have viewed the seven planets as symbols of this universe or life plane, and lunar cycles and lunar mansions as a multiplication of the sevenfold order of life's cycle. The colours of the visible spectrum and septapartite stellar groups would have reinforced the idea that seven was the basic unit for measuring life. Granted this hypothesis, Vedic theologians may have applied the same categorization to other aspects of their existence, i.e., seven wild and domestic animals, seven wild and domestic plants, seven senses and life breaths, seven kinds of food, seven in the matters of ritual worship."[85] However, the obvious fact to be taken note of while searching for any prefiguration of the aspects of later Saptamātṛkās among the Vedic heptads is that this numerical fixity of measuring the world and its elements in *sapta* was not solely reserved for the goddesses. It signified spatial and temporal flux; and, to gauge, to count, to map-out, implied imposing a structure upon the chaotic. Seven, as a measure conceptually abstracted into a single unit, symbolized the unfathomable infinity. While, as time and space it is the complete cycle of completion, and as materiality it is the fullness and saturation, and as experience it is the total fulfilment. "To go beyond the number seven was to be born into a new sphere of existence",[86] either to re-enter into a new cycle or to enter into a higher order of existence. Thus, the connection of Saptamātṛkās with the Vedic sources would be seen as fundamental, whereas the instances of seemingly more specific connective aspects, as discussed below, would bring out a more than incidental point of reference.

R
913
PAN-S

103052

The one heptad concept from Vedic materials that needs to be considered from the premise of the last point mentioned above are those concerning the *Sapta-Sindhu*s — the seven water mothers, the references of which are pervasively linked with Agni, Sūrya, Soma and Varuṇa.

Sūrya is described as being lifted out of the sea by gods.[87] The waters, which are regarded as the birth place of the Sūrya and the Aśvinī Kumāras, are described as Sindhumātarāha.[88] The *āpaḥ* is also called *sindhuvāha* and are seven.[89] Griswold opines that they are the equivalent of the seven mothers as they are said to bear the fetus in the form of Agni or Sūrya.[90] "They are also called *mātṛ*s for it was from the depth of these waters that the sun was seen from the shores of *Sapta-Sindhu* to emerge and ascend the sky".[91]

The personality of Agni in *Veda*s is more deeply embedded with the profusion of heptad features. Though, "In one passage he is truly called, headless and footless: elsewhere he is called butter-faced, butter-backed, butter-haired, flame haired or tawny-haired".[92] One hymn from the first *maṇḍala* of *Ṛgveda* states that, Agni has seven mothers, without stating their names.[93] His seven mothers are said to have taught him wisdom[94] and he dwells within them, who are his second form of existence.[95] He bestows blessings with seven jewels.[96] His seven rays, his essence, are his tongues, reins or flames.[97] They are mentioned as seven red sisters.[98] These, in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* are named as Kālī (the black one), Karālī (of terrific nature), Manojava (one who is swift in thought), Sulohitā (the red one), Sadhumravarṇā (the smoke coloured one), Sphulliṅginī (the sparkling one) and Viśvarūpī (one who has cosmic form).[99] Though in the later literature Kālī and Karālī are the two dreadful forms of goddesses who preside over death, at this historical point along with the other epithets these seem to be the quality of fire. S.K. Dikshit opines that, "there can be no denying that these tongues correspond to the 'seven sisters' or Saptamātṛkās".[100] Though indirect, an interconnection and proximity are suggested between the gods and the goddesses, characterizing the seven goddesses as the tongues of Agni and Agni as the mouth of gods. Even if they are not considered as personifications of feminine divinities, the significant aspect to be noted is that the nature of fire described in the epithets are dreadful, and stress upon its devouring aspects. And these are most significantly conceived as goddesses. The militant and ferocious goddesses of battle-field; the Durgā/Aṁbikā, the Cāmuṇḍā, the Kālī and the Saptamātṛkās of the later *Śākta* religion, latently at least, find their prefiguration here.

The *Sapta-Sindhu* or the seven sacred rivers are frequently mentioned in the *Veda*s.[101] The seven rivers enumerated in *Ṛgveda* are, Irāvatī, Cāndrabhāgā, Vitastā, Vipāsā, Satadru, Sindhu and Sarasvatī.[102] More than recording the geographical locations, and acknowledging their usefulness to the world, their symbolic meaning as mothers, as the sources of origin of the divinities, play a vital role in the myths. They are considered as cosmic rivers, since they are visualized as existing on the earth, in the mid-air and in the heaven. The celestial rivers are the mothers of Agni, the Fire, and Soma, the Moon. The earthly rivers are the mothers of Soma, the Elixir. The seven earthly river mothers prepare the *soma* juice for the sacrifices[103] and is said to be making it with their own milk.[104] Agni is mentioned to have been discovered by gods in the lap of the celestial waters.[105] The *Sapta-Sindhu*s are considered as the sisters of Varuṇa, god of the Sea, who regulated the waters.[106]

However, Sarasvatī is the best of mothers, among rivers and among goddesses.[107] "Beside Sarasvatī, in one hymn,[108] we have an invocation of Sārasvat to give offspring, protection and plenty: his fertilizing waters and breast are referred to. Agni as Sārasvat once appears as a giver of rain."[109] Apart from the significance of the sevenfold aspects of Sarasvatī, the male manifestation of the goddess as Sārasvat brings forth one of the essential aspects of Saptamātṛkās; their transference from the male sexual identity to that of the female. In this case the transference is reverse, where the female is transfigured as a male.

To quote Stella Kramrisch, "What all these heptads have in common is their maternity and their movement."[110] K. Harper elaborately considers the possibility that they all derive their original source from the Kṛttikā *nakṣatra* constellation or the Pleiades.[111] Following the speculation of Kramrisch that, "the celestial rivers are rivers of light",[112] Harper points out that, "In Vedic India, the Kṛttikā marked the beginning of the yearly time cycle and were initiators of the next epoch. They were regarded as the great mothers of time and regeneration."[113] At the same time, the general characteristics of the goddesses in the *Ṛgveda* and also in the *Atharvaveda,* as pointed out by Moti Chandra remain as abstract images, where they are in a nebulous and floating state and as having only the liturgical value and symbolical significance.[114]

The symbolic meaning of Vedic heptads in relation to the later Purāṇic Saptamātṛkās would be found totally distinct from each other, where many new implications get overlaid over the older concepts. Whereas the older heptad concept which signified the completeness and the fullness of the phenomena remain as a pre-condition in the formation of Saptamātṛkās, the intrinsic maternal aspect of the Vedic heptads, finds its place only as an incidentally necessitated prerequisite in the iconic representations, since the mythological narratives of Saptamātṛkās in the *Purāṇa* sources completely excludes the mention of this characteristic altogether.

One myth motif that had its prime importance to the Saptamātṛkā conception,which has been derived from the Vedic religion is the distinction and conflict that is represented between gods and demons. The conflict is so fundamental that the theme persisted as a central motif throughout the evolution of orthodox religion, though not unusual in the lower stratum of Brāhmanical religion as well. The antagonism finds its interpretation in two mutually transferable realms; firstly, as an opposition translated in terms of distinctness and secondly, as a dichotomy telescoped into each other forming a singular concept of a deity.

The Conceptions of Female Deities and Proto-Saptamātṛkās in the Post-Vedic Literary Sources

It is in the *Purāṇa* sources that the Saptamātṛkā acquire definition, where they are visualized primarily as the *śakti*; potent power of the respective male gods. In group, apart from their syncretistic function of bringing the sectarian and other Brāhmanical gods under one singular heading, they also become illustrative of the established notions of the primacy of feminine principle over that of the male, *puruṣa*, a rationalisation achieved via the religion of *Tantra* and *Sāṁkhya* philosophy. The other important aspect of Śāktism is its intrinsic connections with sectarian *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* cults in sharing certain basic theological traits. The study of the historical evolution of this concomitance greatly enable us to analyze the various aspects of *Śākta* conception of divinity, particularly the ambivalent nature of Saptamātṛkā delineations, and the visualization of the all powerful divine feminine in general. Essentially, the ambivalence can be seen located in the coexistence of the benevolent and the malevolent elements in the conception of the divinity, which also intrinsically connect the developmental process of *Śaiva* and *Śākta* cults. The present section is an attempt to focus upon this, so as to enable an analysis of the incipient prefigurations of some of these aspects in the post-Vedic literary sources, before these ideas finally get crystallized in the *Purāṇa* sources. The analysis of the personalities of any of the goddesses, including that of the Saptamātṛkās as found in *Purāṇa* sources is outside the scope of the present section and is dealt in the chapter to follow.

Even all the late Vedic sources considered together do not provide us an exact definition comparable to the Purāṇic conception *Śakti*. Though important for the origin of such conception, the goddesses that figure-in in these materials are largely personifications in epithets and qualifications of the phenomenal world and its elemental qualities and functionalities, without elaborate mythological validations, similar to the Vedic theological configurations.

The earliest mention of Umā Haimavatī, one of the many epithets of Purāṇic Durgā is in the *Kena Upaniṣad,*[115] where she manifests before Indra and other Vedic gods in order to remove the ignorance due to ego, and teaches them that there is no real power, no real doer except *Brahman*. The cryptic myth most significantly identifies the goddess with the ultimate reality, the mysterious *Brahman.* Here, apart from the clear indication of the tendency towards giving concrete personal form to an inconceivable absolute reality, the primacy of a goddess over the Vedic pantheon is clearly indicated. There is no reference of this goddess in the earlier literature, but it is presumed that this mountain goddess is a transformed version of Uṣas in the *Ṛgveda*, who like Umā is also a mountain-born maiden.[116] Further, Sāyaṇa, the commentator on the *Kena Upaniṣad* declares that, Umā means 'knowledge' and speaks of her as the personification of divine knowledge.[117] However, it is significant to note Umā's association with Himālayas which continues in the *Purāṇa* tradition also. Odile Divakaran points out that the association of Umā with mountains make it easy for Śaivism to absorb her, since Rudra, much before the goddess, is linked with the Himālayas (*Muñjavat*).[118] However, in *Kena Upaniṣad* Umā is autonomous, who is identified as the prime mover of the universe, while analogically she stands as the Himālaya, eternal and unchangeable.

Goddess Ambikā is referred to in the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*[119] as the sister of Rudra. They are invoked together to take part in the *tryambaka homa*. Ambikā in *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* is propitiated with oblations, to avert her power of death, and for medicine, wealth and cattle.[120] She is ambivalent assuming a rather primitive function of control over illness and fertility.[121] In *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, Rudra is called Umāpati,[122] Umā's husband, indicating the importance of the goddess in relation to Śiva. Yet, Umā and Ambikā, the goddesses of the later Vedic period primarily assume familial association with Rudra and do not have the autonomous status.

The other significant references of the goddess from the post-Vedic literature are as follows:

Taittirīya Āraṇyaka mentions Durgādevī Virocanī i.e. Virocana's daughter,[123] Durgī, Kātyāyanī and Kanyākumārī.[124] As stated in an earlier context *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* mentions Kālī, Karālī, etc. as the seven tongues of Agni.[125] *Sānkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[126] and *Manu Smṛti*[127] mention the goddess Bhadrakālī.

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* the absolute *Brahman* is associated with his *Śakti*, who is not an altogether separate principle but belongs to him as his own.[128] She is called *māyā* the power of *Brahman* and Śiva is called *māyin*.[129]

One significant question to consider is weather or not these goddesses were conceived as the manifestation of one and the only Goddess. Probably they were not. But, if considered together, Umā and Ambikā can be seen representing two archetypal functions, namely those of the positive and the negative elementary characteristics respectively. At this stage of the development of the goddess-worship, functionally they are disparate non-deity entities, clamouring for the future primacy, the familial associations with Rudra aiding such a process. However, the possibility of tracing the coexistence of both the elementary traits in one goddess, namely Ambikā is significant in this context. Sukumari Bhattacharji has argued that, the early references of Ambikā reveal two aspects: first, that she was originally Rudra's sister, and second that she had cruel and malevolent associations.[130] Significantly, she is propitiated also for the purpose of fertility. This ambivalent characterization is a forerunner to much of Devī mythology of later times.

The concept of any supreme goddess, such as the Purāṇic Ambikā/Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī is dormant in the post-Vedic literature. Aṁbikā and Umā in these sources represent only specific aspects of the goddess and therefore cannot be designated as *the* 'Great Goddess'. The above references "are inconclusive even if taken in their totality, the Epic-Purāṇic Durgā did not develop from any one of them, but from all of them and also from many other elements".[131]

The development of *Śākta* cult is intimately interconnected with that of Śiva. Very many are the instances of parallelism in basic traits between Durgā and Śiva. *Ṛgveda* extols him for his medicines,[132] suggesting that he presides over death. The general character of prayers addressed to Rudra is : do not, out of anger, injure our children and descendants, our people, our cattle, our houses and do not kill our men.[133] In the *Ṛgveda* Rudra is raised to supreme power.[134] In *Śatarudrīya* the prayer to Rudra as " the further shore . . . the one who helps in crossing . . . who is a bridge",[135] is an exact parallel of Durgā's power of enabling the devotees to tide over difficulties. She is called Tāriṇī in *Mahābhārata*.[136] In *Devī Mahātmya*, Durgā is described as a boat to take the devotees across the difficult ocean of existence.[137] Considering the totality of post-Vedic references of goddesses it can be suggested that in the early stages, before the *Śākta* cult gathered independent existence, different autochthonous goddesses began to be appropriated within *Śaiva* cult, and slowly began developing as a separate sect and became a focus for all different mother-goddesses epiphanies.[138] In the Purāṇic Mātṛkā tradition too, the *Śaivaite* affiliation is foremost. The militant, blood drinking and malevolent characteristics in Mātṛkās, is a corollary common to *Śākta* and *Śaiva* cults.

While woman in Purāṇic Śaivism appeared pre-eminently as *śakti*-consort and as mother or merely as a stereotypical wife, her role in the *Vaiṣṇava* religion is primarily as consort-wife, symbolizing wealth and prosperity or that of *bhakta*-lover, though *Sāṁkhya* rationalisation of *prakṛti-puruṣa* too is a simultaneous meta-text in each of the above instances. (Historically, Śrī-Lakṣmī, who has been appropriated by Viṣṇu represents an ancient mother goddess of proto-historic times.[139] She is identified with Yakṣī, Pṛthvī, Umā-Durgā and other goddesses of corn and fertility. In the early stages she does not exclusively belong to Viṣṇu, but is owned and propitiated by Indra, Kubera, Buddhists, Jains and Asuras.[140] Moti Chandra has provided adequate literary evidences to prove the non-Āryan origin of this goddess, who at a later stage is assimilated into Āryan fold.)

The sectarian divinity conceived as feminine found its place in Brāhmanism, subsequent to the acculturation of Vedic and the autochthonous traditions of the land. The pre-eminent importance of Tāntric religion in the development of the Śāktism, distinct from Vedic religion, is the course through which Śāktism establishes itself within the neo-Brāhmanical religious sphere. However, the above evidences of goddesses epiphanies in the proto-historic, Vedic and post-Vedic periods, neither make it possible for the identification of the emergence of sectarian *Śākta* cult nor enable us to identify the manifestation of a conclusive, monistic goddess concept. The materials discussed in this chapter can be seen inchoate for this purpose. The conglomerate divine feminine in the Vedic sources largely continue to be so in the period to follow, but with a shift in the accent, which surely exemplify the tendency towards identifying the divine feminine monotheistically, though without *Śaiva* affiliations. This tendency can be seen assuming an organized, theological validity only when the Upaniṣadic speculation of the monic *Brahman*, the abstract concept of cosmic principle as source of all creation, preservation and destruction becomes identified with a specific divine entity, omnipresent and omnipotent. This had to conflate with the Tāntric-*Sāṁkhya* concept of the pre-eminent *Prakṛti* to evolve into sectarianism of Śāktism, which becomes evident in the *Śākta Purāṇa* narrations. It is significant to note that in the mythological realm of Śāktism, not a single goddess, not even the all powerful Durgā/Aṁbikā conjures up a vision comparable to that of the sectarian conception of Viṣṇu or Śiva. But, it is in the theological and philosophical rationalisation of *Prakṛti* and Śakti, with Tāntric, *Sāṁkhya* and Vedāntic implications, (as evident from *Devī-Māhātmya* section of *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and *Devī Bhāgavata*) that we would identify the pre-eminent definition of *Śākta* conception of sectarian divinity, who at the same time escape being *an* individuated personality, in contrast to that of Śiva or Viṣṇu, although theology accepted very many manifestations of 'Her'. It is also important to note that this abstract conception of the *Śākta* religion eschewed any preference for a personalized *bhakti* mode, (unlike that of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism) as far as the worship practices were concerned, and indicates a preference for Tāntric ritualistic mode for 'Her' propitiation.

References

1. (A) M.K. Dhavalikar, The Origin of Sapta Mātṛkās, in *BDCRT*, 1960-61.
   (B) Buddha Prakash, *Ṛgveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, Hoshiarpur, 1966.

2. Katherine Anne Harper, *Seven Hindu Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation : The Iconography of the Saptamatrikas,* New York, 1989, p. 5, also gives the details of their publications.
3. Ernest Mackay, *Further Excavations at Mohenjo-Daro*, 2 vols., New Delhi, 1938, pl. xciv, fig. 430, excavation no. 7734.
4. K. Harper, *op.cit.*, p. 5.
5. Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol.1, London, 1931, pp. 64-65.
6. E. Mackay, *Early Indus Civilization,* London, 1948, p. 58.
7. M.K. Dhavalikar, *op.cit.*
8. K. Harper, *op.cit.*, p. 6.
9. Pupul Jayakar, *The Earthen Drum*, New Delhi, 1980, published in a revised, updated edition as *The Earth Mother*, 1989, p. 73.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.
12. Father Heras, *Proto-Indo Mediterranean Culture*, Vol. I, p. 231, as referred by M.K. Dhavalikar, *op.cit.,* p. 23.
13. *asya vāmasye palitasya hotastasya brāto madhyamo astayaśne*
tṛtiyo bhrāto ghritapaṁṣṭo asyātropaśayam vispatiṁsapta putraṁ
— *Ṛgveda*, I.164, I. Buddha Prakash, *op.cit.*, p. 32-34.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
15. *saptardhagarbhāḥ bhuvanasya retaḥ*. — *Ṛgveda*. I.174, 36.
16. V.S. Agrawala, *Vision in Long Darkness*, p. 116, as referred by Buddha Prakash, *op.cit*, p. 36.
17. K.N. Sastri, *New Light on Indus Civilization*, Delhi, 1957.
18. M.K. Dhavalikar, *op.cit.*, pp. 23-26.
19. K.N. Sastri, *op.cit.,* Contesting the suggestion by Sir John Marshall and others about the predominance of goddess in the Indus pantheon the scholar argues for the dominant place of a male god, who is supposed to be the presiding spirit of the divine tree of knowledge.
20. Sir John Marshall, *Indus Valley Civilization*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1973, p. 49.
21. S.R. Rao, *Lothal and the Indus Civilization,* London, 1973, p. 57. Further he observes that, the distinctive type of Indus Valley Mother-Goddess figures is not found anywhere outside the Indus Valley, not even in Kot-Diji. The few examples form Kalibangan and Lothal differ widely from the typical Mother-Goddess figures from Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The absence of Mother-Goddess sculptures at Lothal, Desalpur, Rupar, Kalibangan and Alamgirpur suggests that the cult of Mother-Goddess was confined to the Indus Valley alone.
22. Irene N. Gajjar, *Ancient Indian Art and the West,* Bombay 1971, p. 41.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
24. M.C.P. Srivastava, *Mother-Goddess in Indian Art Archaeology and Literature*, Delhi, 1979, p. 17.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Hawkes and Woolly, *History of Mankind,* vol. I, p. 702 as quoted by M.C.P. Srivastava, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

27. E.O. James, *The Ancient Gods*, London, 1960, p.79., as quoted by M.C.P. Srivastava, *op.cit.*, p.18.
28. Gustav Oppert, *The Original Inhabitants of India,* pp. 449-50, and 504, as referred to by Sir John Marshall, *op.cit.,* 1973, p. 49.
29. Sir John Marshall, *op.cit.*,1973, p. 49.
30. William Crooke, *Religion and Folklore of Northern India,* p. 47. As referred to by John Marshall, *op.cit.*
31. E. Mackay, *Early Indus Civilization,* London, 1948, p. 54.
32. Pupul Jayakar, *op.cit.*, p. 67.
33. (A) Buddha Prakash, *Yajña : An Anthropo-Sociological Approach,* B.V. XVI (1956) pp. 60-67.
    (B) Pupul Jayakar, *op.cit.*, p. 67. "Is this the moment of death, of human sacrifice to propitiate the Earth Mother ? Significantly the identical script appears on both sides of the seal, connecting the two rituals of death and birth".
34. Sir John Marshall, *op.cit.,* 1973. Compares with the terracotta relief from Bhita of early Gupta period. The great popularity of this deity in the early medieval period is attested by the large number of images found from various regions.
35. E.O. James, *The Cult of Mother Goddess*, London, 1959, preface.
36. *Ibid.,* pp. 32-37.
37. Sir John Marshall, *op.cit.*, 1973, p. 62. considers the pre-Āryan organ of this tradition.
38. Moti Chandra, "Studies in the Cult of the Mother-Goddess in Ancient India", in *BPWMWI,* No.12, 1973.
39. E.O. James, *The Cult of Mother-Goddess,* London, 1959. The socio-historical processes effecting such shifts can be summed up as following: "In the pre-hunting stage there was no production, only simple appropriation of seeds, fruits and small animals and consequently there was no division on labour". (George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, London, vol. I, pp. 41-42.) However, it was upon women that the rearing of the young was dependent. (D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *Lokāyata*, New Delhi, 1981, p. 240.) The mothers and their offspring, therefore, "acquired a kinship, a consciousness of mutual obligations and attachments springing from the natural affinity between a mother and her children". (George Thomson, *op.cit.*, pp. 42-43.
40. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.*, p. 241.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 241. (note: Referring to G.Thomson (*Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, London, Vol. I, 1949, Vol. II,1955.) D. Chattopadhyaya sums up the historiography of the method thus, "In the last century, following Bachofen, the ethnologists were unanimous that the mother-right represented the original form of social organization. This view is vigorously contested by many contemporary authorities though they are without any agreed positive alternative. In recent years, Briffault, on the basis of vast data has reaffirmed the old view, though not without introducing important modifications." (p. 239)
42. Extensively quotes from R.P. Chandra, (*Indo-Aryan Races*, Rajsahi, 1916) and John Marshall, *op.cit.*, 1973.
43. R. Briffault, *The Mothers*, London, 1952, 2nd edition. As referred to by D. Chattopadyaya, *op.cit.,* p. 273.
44. D. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.*, p. 277.
45. *Ibid.,* p. 289.
46. "Next, O ye gods, I shall support (i.e., nourish) the whole world with the life-sustaining vegetables, which shall grow out of my own body (*ātma deha samudbhavaiḥ*) during a

period of heavy rain; I shall gain fame on the earth then as Śākaṁbarī. *Devī-Māhātmya*, canto 92, *śloka* 43-44, as referred by D. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.*, p. 293.

47. D. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.*, p. 293.
48. Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*, New York, 1954, p. 3.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
54. In Egypt the images of Isis-Hathor suckling Horus or that of goddess Nut, represent the positive elementary character, whereas the images of Ta-Urt represents the negative elementary character. Such instances, as existed in different cultures, can be multiplied. In india, the images of Kālī, Cāmuṇḍā and Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī signify the negative and positive elementary characters respectively.
55. K. Harper, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-11, assuming that the people of Indus Valley civilization were related to the Dravidians, whose origin is traced to a region outside India, on the basis of Dravidian languages having been linked by the Finno-Ugric branch of Ural-Altaic (ref. Andree F. Sjoberg, "The Present State of Knowledge", in *Symposium on Dravidian Civilization, University of Texas at Austin*, ed. by Andree F. Sjoberg, Jenkins, Austin, 1971, pp. 4-5) and on the basis of the theory that Dravidian is a cognate with Achaemenied Elamite, an ancient language from Persian Gulf (ref. David W. McAlpin, Toward Proto-Elamo-Dravidian, *Language* 50, no. 1 (March, 1974) : 89. To quote Harper, "This evidence may mean that certain symbols from Neolithic Europe and the Indus Valley have stemmed from a common source and have parallel meanings." *Ibid.*, p. 9.
56. It is evident by now that many scholars, J. Marshall, P. Jayakar, K. Harper and M.K. Dhavalikar follow this method.
57. A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology,* Delhi, 1981, pp. 124-25.
58. M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature,* Vol. I, Calcutta, 1927, pp. 64-65, as referred to by D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.*, pp. 243-44.
59. Emily Kearns, "Indian Myth", in *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, ed. by Carolyne Larrington, London, 1992, p. 191.
60. A.B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads,* Delhi, 1976., Vol. 31, pp. 58-59.
61. W.J. Wilkins, *Hindu Mythology (Vedic and Puranic)*, p. 14.
62. *Atharva Veda,* I. 31.2; Griffith, *Hymans of the Atharva Veda*, I, p. 36.
63. Macdonell, *op.cit.*, p. 120.
64. S.K. Dikshit, *The Mother-Goddess,* New Delhi, 1957, p. 46.
65. Sukumari Bhattacharji, *The Indian Theogony,* Calcutta, 1978, p. 160.
66. *Ṛgveda*, 10.108.
67. Emily Kearns, *op.cit.,* pp. 190-91.
68. A.B. Keith, *op.cit.* It has been often suggested that this is due to the Semitic, specifically Babylonian influence. In Europe the number seven rarely have sacred character until the influence of Christianity, or at least until the Jewish week had become familiar in the Western world. The week of seven days is not clearly proved as Babylonian. Originally the mystic conception of the number seven belonged to India.
69. *Ṛgveda,* X.122.3.

70. The original number of Ādityas is uncertain, and only once (*Ṛgveda*, IX. 114.3) it is mentioned as seven.
71. *Ṛgveda,* IV. 42.
72. *Ibid.*, VIII.81.20; *Sāmaveda*, II.2.1.2.4.2.
73. *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, IX.32; *Taittirīya Saṁhitā,* II.4.6, VI.1.8 and VII.2.2.65.
74. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā,* V.2.5.
75. *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, XXXIV.55. These are touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, mind and intellect.
76. They are called as our divine fathers, 'the seers'. Macdonell opines that, "the number may have been suggested by that of the seven technical priests of whom they would in that case, have been regarded as the prototypes. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, they become individualized by each receiving a name. In the same *Brāhmaṇa* they are also regarded as the seven stars in the constellation of the Great Bear — A.A. Macdonell, *op.cit.*, p. 144. Keith observes that, the seven Hotṛs presumably correspond to the seven seers. In one passage of *Ṛgveda*, Agni is identified with the Hotṛ, the Potṛ, the Nestṛ, the Agnidh, the Pracastṛ and the Adhvaryu and *Brahman*. (A.B. Keith, *op.cit.*, Vol. 32, p. 294). Manu was institutor of sacrifice and he presented the fire offering with the seven Hotṛs to the Gods. (*Rgveda*, X. 63).
77. *Ṛgveda*, II.18.1 and VIII.51.4.
78. *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, IX.32.
79. *Ṛgveda*, III.7.1.
80. *Ibid.,* IX.102.2 and X.8.4.
81. *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā,* XVII.79.
82. *Ṛgveda,* VIII.85.16 and X.120.6.
83. *Ibid.*, X.55.3.
84. K. Harper, *op.cit.*, chapter 2.
85. *Ibid.,* p. 19.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
87. *Ṛgveda*, II.72.7.
88. *Ṛgveda*, I.46.2.
89. *Ṛgveda*, X.194.8, VII.47.1-4, VIII.54.4.
90. H.D. Griswold, *The Religion of Ṛgveda,* Bombay, 1923.
91. H.D. Griswold, *ibid.*
92. A.B. Keith, *op.cit.*, p. 154.
93. *Ṛgveda,* I.141.2.
94. *Sāmaveda,* II.1.1.5.
95. *Ṛgveda*, I.141.2.
96. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, IV.1.3.
97. *Ṛgveda,* I.146.2,5 and III.6. *Vājasāneyī Saṁhitā*, 17.79.
98. *Ṛgveda*, X.5.5.
99. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* I.2.4.
100. S.K. Dikshit, *op.cit.*, p. 122.
101. H.D. Griswold, *op.cit.,* p. 223.
102. *Ṛgveda,* IX.79.3, III.45 IX 63.15.

103. *Ibid.*, I. 34.8.
104. *Ibid.*, IX.9.4; 66.6.; 86.25; 92.4; 86.21.
105. *Ibid.*, III.1.3.
106. *Ibid.*, VII.41.2.
107. *Ibid.*, II.41.
108. *Ibid.*, VII.96.
109. A.B. Keith, *op.cit.*, p. 174.
110. Stella Kramrisch, "The Indian Great Goddess", in *History of Religions*, 14, 1975, p. 262.
111. K. Harper, *op.cit.*, p. 24.
112. Stella Kramrisch, *op.cit.*, p. 262.
113. K. Harper, *op.cit.*, p. 24.
114. Moti Chandra, "Studies in the Cult of the Mother-Goddess", in *BPWMWI*, No. 12, 1973, p. 2.
115. *Kena Upaniṣad,* III.12.
116. M.C.P. Srivastava, *Mother Goddess in Indian Art, Archaeology and Literature*, Delhi, 1979, p. 37.
117. M.J. Wilkins, *op.cit.*, p. 239.
118. Odile Divakaran, "Durga the Great Goddess, Meaning and Forms in the Early Period", in *Discourses on Śiva*, ed. by Micheal W. Meister, Philadelphia, 1984.
119. *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, III.53.
120. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā,* I.8.6.4.
121. Odile Divakaran, *op.cit.*, p. 271.
122. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka,* X.18.
123. *Ibid.*, X 1.7.
124. *Ibid.*, these names appear in the verses addressed to Agni.
125. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I.2.4.
126. *Sānkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra,* II.15.14.
127. *Manu Smṛti,* III.89.
128. *Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad,* I.3.
129. *Ibid.*, IV.10.
130. Sukumari Bhattacharji, *op.cit,* p. 158.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
132. *Ṛgveda,* VII.46.3.
133. *Ibid.*, I.114.8.
134. R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems,* Varanasi, 1965, p. 102-104.
135. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā,* IV.5.8.
136. *Mahābhārata,* 6.23.5, As referred to by Odile Divakaran, *op.cit.*
137. *Devī-Māhātmya,* II.4.
138. Sukumari Bhattacharji, *op.cit.,* p. 15.
139. Moti Chandra, *op.cit.*, p. 3.
140. *Ibid.*

2

Mātṛkā Prototypes-II

(Tutelary Mātṛkā Divinities of the Kuṣāṇa Period)

If the connotation of the term Mātṛkā is restricted, meaning specifically the feminine potentialities of the Brāhmanical gods, such as Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumāri, etc., a group of Kuṣāṇa sculptures representing mother and child, become an art historical problem of considerable importance within the context of the study of Saptamātṛkā. These motherly goddesses, presented singly or in groups of varying numbers, with animal or human faces, and affiliated to varied cults and sects, do not enable their identification to be Saptamātṛkā; for, they are not the *śakti*-personifications of the Brāhmanical gods. However so, scholars have been designating them as Mātṛkā divinities, considering the generic sense of the term, and taking in view the implied motherhood, (Mātṛkā being derived from the root *mātṛ*, meaning mother), without any special consideration for the distinctness between the two tradition. The usage, however, is corroborated by textual usages as well. Yet, it remains to be inquired as to what implication the so-called Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā tradition has for the Purāṇic Saptamātṛkās, if the latter is defined precisely in terms of *śakti* personifications. Iconographically, do they in some ways suggest the prefiguration/prototype of the Saptamātṛkā concept? The conglomerate Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā tradition do not lend itself to an obvious answer, hence, though the primary intention in the present chapter is to characterize the rupture between the two traditions, (and try to locate the continuity, if there is any) a descriptive presentation of the deities in relation to the motif of mother and child is proposed.

Keeping these purposes in view, the attempt herein inevitably entail the contexualisation of the questions within the acculturisation processes and assimilations in the development of neo-Brāhmanism and other heterogeneous sects. Further, these concerns dovetail themselves to the formerly noted question of the origin and evolution of a particular iconographical type, (i.e., of mother and child) which in the subsequent periods lend itself to encode meanings of a totally different nature.

The cultic heterogeneity of Mātṛkā tradition of the Kuṣāṇa period, which at the same time also externalizes a commonality of function (for they being deities related to the concern with the well-being of children, auspiciousness and fertility) are discussed so as to distinguish them from the later Saptamātṛkā tradition. This would also enable us to see the cultic distinctions on the one hand, and on the other specify the iconological interconnections between the two separate spheres of representations.

A Critique of Previous Researches

One of the first scholars to have analyzed certain aspects of Kuṣāṇa *bālagraha* tradition and sculptures was V.S. Agrawala,[1] who brought out the importance of the corroborative literary data. In the chapter *Khaṇḍamaha* (festival of Skanda) while enumerating on the emerging Skanda cult, he analyses the importance of the folk/popular goddesses related to children. On the basis of the data in *Mahābhārata Vanaparva, Suśruta Saṁhitā, Caraka Saṁhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅga Saṁgraha*, the scholar identified the process of assimilation of folk goddesses into the Brāhmanical fold. "This was the result of overall influence of the *Bhāgavata* movement which started in Mathura, and gained momentum in the surrounding regions. The secret of this process of synthesis consisted in the fact that all these minor gods and goddesses were looked upon as manifestation of a single supreme god who was Bhagavān Vāsudeva".[2] The origin of Skanda is traced form the lower stratum of tutelary deity, that is as one of the *piśāca* host. According to Agrawala, in this first stage of evolution, Skanda was assimilated by the cult of Rudra; in the second stage into that of Agni, and in the third stage, into that of Indra. Further, he pointed out that in the evolution, Skanda was taken to be a special deity seizing children (*bālagraha*). Going by literary data Agrawala established that just as the horrible *Graha*s, *Yakṣa*s and *Rākṣasa*s became assimilated into the overall cult of Skanda, all mother-goddesses of destructive nature and evil influence were imbibed by the cult of Ṣaṣṭhī, (Bhādra or Devasena) the consort of Skanda.

Throwing light on the shift from the earlier tradition to that of Saptamātṛkās, Agrawala pointed out that innumerable mother-goddesses, who were accepted into the family of Skanda, were supplemented by the new standard seven divine mothers. The names of previous mother goddesses gradually faded and disappeared from the scene.[3]

One of the major concerns in the studies of the Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā sculptures was finding correlatives between textual references and the sculptural representations. The researches of N.P. Joshi on the topic have been in the direction of identifying the specific deity with the help of literary sources.[4] His attempts in formulating a comprehensive evaluation of the tradition by taking into consideration the diversified types of Mātṛkās, like, Ṣaṣṭhī, Vasudharā, etc. have gone a long way in the exploration of the Mātṛkā tradition of the Kuṣāṇa period. Certain misunderstood iconographical types by the earlier scholars, (for instance V.S. Agrawala) have been corrected in the light of new documents.[5] A similar approach has been also used by R.C. Agrawala and in fact both scholars agree upon certain problematic identifications.[6] N.P. Joshi's researches have even gone a step further attempting to identify specific *Lokamātā*s like Pūtanā, Śakunī, etc. from among sculptural icons of Mātṛkā groups, on the basis of textual descriptions and iconographical particuliarities. In the discussions to follow each of these interpretations are considered separately.

In the context of the studies on *bālagraha* deities, specific and intensive study of a particular iconography, i.e., of Harinaigameṣin, is a major contribution of U.P. Shah.[7] The textual descriptions contained in *Kalpasūtra, Mahābhārata* and medical treatises are extensively analyzed in order to elucidate upon the nature and functions of this tutelary deity. Apart from the context of *bālagraha*, the specificities of the deity in the Jain religion and mythology is also analyzed by the scholar.

J.N. Tiwari in his book, *The Goddess Cult in Ancient India* has a whole chapter dealing with Mātṛs.[8] By recording the extensive literary data and inscriptions, he establishes the prevalence and relative popularity of the *Mātṛ* cult in the ancient and early medieval periods. The visual manifestations in sculpture and their significance is outside the concern of the scholar. However, he points out that the "early images of the *Mātṛs* from Mathura betray only an emergent iconography."[9]

The descriptive studies of scholars, making use of literary data to elucidate upon the specific iconographic form have largely missed out the art historical significance of the Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā sculptures. The information derived from the textual sources has enabled the confirmation of the prevalence and the general nature of the Mātṛkā-worship during this period. Baring a few exceptional iconographic types, the use of the texts in throwing light on the specific iconography and meaning has been limited. The analysis of *Āraṇyaka Parvan* and *Śalya Parvan* of *Mahābhārata* by N.P. Joshi and J.N. Tiwari have not yielded many correlatives between literary references and the sculptural representations. The references to *mātarāḥ* and *mātṛgaṇāḥ*, in the context of the birth of Skanda, has not enabled the identification of the specific Mātṛkās within the sculptural representations of the theme. When the identities of a large number of Mātṛkās remain anonymous, even after bringing out extensive literary data, it would be only an over-simplification to attribute a common designation of *bālagraha* to all of them. Though textual references are abundant in showing the prevalence of such a tradition, it would be wrong to view the whole of Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā sculptures as belonging to the tradition of *bālagraha*s. The presence of Kubera and Lakṣmī among Mātṛkās, as evident in sculptural reliefs, is totally unattested in the literary data regarding the *bālagraha*. Further, though Harinaigameṣin finds his way into the textual references of *bālagraha,* in the medical treatises as well as in the context of birth of Skanda in *Mahābhārata,* the representations of the deity are noticed only in the Jain context. In the light of the above discussion, we may ask the question whether the sculptural tradition could develop certain features of its own, which were undocumented in the contemporary literature. The present chapter, while considering the literary evidence to be important, primarily depends on the sculptural materials for iconological interpretations.

The above researches have generally ignored the art historical significance of Kuṣāṇa

Mātṛkā sculptures. The importance of this phase of development in relation to the later period has not been given enough attention. The only exception from this is the interpretations of Katherine Harper, since she considers the Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā sculptures within the historical process of fusion between the Vedic and aboriginal traditions.[10] Harper considers the evolution from Kuṣāṇa to Saptamātṛkā tradition conclusively, which has been generally taken for granted by other scholars, and points out that Kuṣāṇa materials render clues to the evolution of later tradition.[11] The distinct meaning levels of the two traditions and the rupture in the change, however has been over looked by the scholar.

Available to us as architectural fragments, or as small votive tablets, without any information of their relational location in the iconographic schema, the known Mātṛkā sculptures of the Kuṣāṇa period are scanty in number and relatively small in proportions. However, a consideration of the diversity of cultic affiliations they exemplify, and the totality of iconographical meanings they render, enable us to derive significant conclusions regarding the acculturisation of these tutelary deities into different contemporary religions of the Kuṣāṇa times. The association of different Mātṛkās to a specific male tutelary deity, signify their meanings and functions. One proposition, central to the present study, is that the groups like that of animal and bird faced Mātṛkā(s) alongside Kubera and Skanda, assume significance when interpreted on the basis of their affiliations within the specific cult. Though the meaning of certain Mātṛkā type is evasive, the relational specificity and status to the male companion render them a certain associative meaning and significance.

At the same time, however heterogeneous the associations of Mātṛkās may be, certain common iconographical features unify them. Features like the commonality of the posture (i.e., seated in *godōhikāsana*), the presence of *abhaya-hasta*, the avoidance of any extra hands or heads, etc., lend them a certain homogeneity. The distinguishing features like the bird and animal faces, presence of children or otherwise, attributes like the lotus or the wine cup, or the association with a specific male god, give them a certain individuality and specificity of function.

Though the focus of the present chapter is the iconographical analysis of Kuṣāṇa examples, certain conclusions are arrived at on the basis of stylistic features also. It may be noted that none of the sculptures discussed here are dated by inscriptions. The scope for establishing relative chronology by comparing with other dated sculptures is also limited, since the quality of the major Kuṣāṇa sculptures can, in no way, be matched with the rather small proportioned Mātṛkā sculptures. However, in the process of this study, certain stylistic progress had been observed, which notwithstanding the obvious limitations of approach, is supported by some other arguments in the thesis.

The Therianthropic Mātṛkās, Skanda and the Bālagraha Tradition

One of the most primitive aspect in the tradition of the Mātṛkā iconography is identifiable in the representations of the bird and animal faced Mother-Goddesses. In sculpture they are represented either independently (as in the case of the female version of Harinaigameṣin), or in groups of varying numbers, wherein the identification of any specific goddess is difficult. However, an important cultic association of therianthropic goddesses is with Skanda, which is attested both in literature and sculpture.

In the myth about the birth of Skanda and his subsequent appointment as *devasenādhipati* in the *Āraṇyaka Parvan* of *Mahābhārata*,[12] several independent groups of female divinities came to be associated with the newly emerging dynamic god. Though elaborate in naming and identifying a large number of female beings in the context of the confused story of Skanda's birth,[13] the account concerning the female spirits is also confused and chaotic. The following is an attempt in distinguishing various groups of feminine spirits, who are mentioned in the story of Skanda's birth.

(1) The *Lokamātā*s, the daughters of Dakṣa Prajāpati who are sent by Indra to kill Skanda. Unable to harm the powerful child, then seek his protection, and pray to him to become their son, and Skanda respects them.[14]

(2) While Agni and *Lokamātā*s attend upon Skanda, from the fury of *Lokamātā*s a female divinity is born who holds a *triśūla* who began protecting Skanda.[15]

(3) The blood drinking and cruel daughter of the red sea protects Skanda as her child, while *Lokamātā*s sit around him along with other gods.[16]

(4) The mighty maidens who destroy fetus and children, who came out from the left side of Skanda, due to the smite from Indra's *vajra*. They are considered to be the children of Bhagavān Viśākhā, who supports Skanda in his war. Amongst the *mātṛgaṇa*, Viśākhā is known as Bhadraśākhā. From that time onwards men in the world consider Skanda as the father of all children. Those who wish the well-being of their children worship Agni, Rudra, Svāhā and Umā for they are the parents of Skanda.[17]

(5) Skanda divides the maidens who come out of the fire, named Tapo, into *śiva* and *aśiva*, in fulfilment of their request to be worshipped by the world.[18]

(6) Kākī, Hālimā, Rudrā, Brahalī, Āryā, Palalā and Mitrā, who are called the mothers of children beget a child known as *śiśu* with the blessing of Skanda. The child is described as having red eyes and possessing cruel nature.[19]

(7) The six desolate wives of the seven sages, Kṛttikās, request Skanda to consider them as his mother, and Skanda makes them the *kṛttikā* constellation.[20]

(8) The *Lokamātā*s (probably the original *Lokamātā*s who attended Skanda in the beginning) wish to be his mothers, which Skanda accepts. They also express their wish to be replaced by the older *Lokamātā*s, who according to them should not be worshipped any more. He grants them the responsibility of inflicting disease upon the children of mortals, till they are sixteen years old. Further, Skanda grants his terrible aspect to them from his body, which is named as Skanda Apasmāra, who becomes a *graha* terrible

to children. She is also called Śakuni (*graha*), Pūtanā (*rākṣasī*), Śītapūtanā (*piśācī*), Revatī, and Mukhamaṇḍikā, who is also identified as Diti, the mother of *daityas*. It is mentioned that Śakuni destroys the children of earth travelling around seated on the cow named Surabhi. The mother of dogs, named Śaramā, the mother of trees named Karamjanīlayā are also described as destroying children. It is prescribed that those who wish children should worship *karanjea* tree. Apart from the above-mentioned names, other eighteen *grahas* are also mentioned, though without naming them specifically. All of them are described as having preference for flesh and wine and remain at the labour room for seven days.[21]

(9) Kadrū is mentioned as assuming subtle body so as to enter the womb of pregnant women and eat up the fetus, as a result of which a snake comes out of the womb.[22]

(10) The mother of *Gandharvas* and *Apsaras* are also mentioned as taking away the fetus. The daughter of red sea, Lohitāyanī, who had fed milk to Skanda is pointed out as being worshipped in the *kadamba* tree.[23]

(11) Āryā is described as the mother of Skanda, who is worshipped for fulfilling various wishes.[24]

(12) All these goddesses dangerous to children until they are sixteen years old, are the *graha* of Kumāra (Skanda). They are to be worshipped with *pūjā, dhūpa, dīpa* and bath and for appeasement *bali* should be offered in the name of Skanda.[25]

Though confused, the *Mahābhārata* references of malevolent goddesses related to the emergence of the new godhead Skanda illustrate certain basic features regarding acculturation in the formation of neo-Brāhmanism. The story of the birth of Skanda points towards the emergence of Skanda cult, by encompassing into its fold various minor and yet powerful malevolent goddesses. *Lokamātās*; the malevolent goddesses propitiated by the 'people', belonged to a lower strata in neo-Brāhmanism, and their acculturation through deification coincided with the replacement of power of the Vedic Indra by Skanda. By clubbing *Lokamātās* along with the emerging new god, their incorporation is accomplished, leading to subordination. This process is obvious since the conflict between the tutelary goddesses and Skanda leads to the resolution of accepting them as his mothers. Within the situation of multiple parentage of Skanda (which includes, Svāhā, Agni, Kṛttikā, Umā and Śiva in the different versions of narration) the acculturation of the tutelary goddesses into a higher position in the Brāhmanical pantheon exemplify the wider context of subordination and subsumption of subaltern classes and the female gender under the emerging neo-Brāhmanical domination.

The *Āraṇyaka Parvan* instance of the subsumption of tutelary Mātṛkās under the neo-Brāhmanical power (through the persona of Skanda, whose appropriation too was simultaneous) find mention in a number of other contemporary and later texts. The following enumeration of these can enable us to imagine the deep implication of these processes.

The *Śalyaparvan* of *Mahābhārata* mentions two hundred and thirteen Mātṛkās associated with Skanda. According to N.P. Joshi this list has been compiled with the help of several other lists found elsewhere.[26]

The *Kumārika Khaṇda* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, in the context when Indra struck *vajra* on Skanda, Śākha and Naigameya (Variously referred to in the present text as Harinaigameṣin, Hariṇegameṣin, Naigameṣin, Negameṣi, Naigameṣa and other derivations according to the particular textual reference) emerge from Skanda and several female spirits also originate, who are described as carrying away babies from wombs or after birth.[27] They are called *śiśumātaraḥ* and seven of them are named as Kākī, Hālimā, Rudrā, Vṛṣabhā, Āryā, Palalā and Mitrā.[28] The *Purāṇa* also refers to their dreadful son *śiśu* and calls the entire group as *vīrāṣṭaka.*[29] Comparing the *Mahābhārata* and *Skanda Purāṇa* lists, N.P. Joshi opines that, the lists of the two texts are very much similar except Brahmaṭā and Mālinī, who have been substituted by Vṛṣabhā and Rudrā. He further adds that, "Apparently the *Skanda Purāṇa* has incorporated the older account of the *Mahābhārata* with certain changes."

Vāmana Purāṇa mentions that, Mātṛkās accompanying Skanda assume the form of birds and go through the skies.[30] This *Purāṇa* gives a long list of fiftynine Mātṛkās. According to N.P. Joshi of these about seventeen are common with the *Śalyaparvan* list, and about eleven are to be found in the *Skanda Purāṇa* list of fortysix names.[31]

Agni Purāṇa gives a list of thirtyeight female divinities headed by Skanda. Of these *bālagraha*, those that affect children day-wise are called the Pūtanā, and the ones affecting them year-wise are named as Sukumārikā.[32] The significant point to be noted is that Cāmuṇḍā is recommended to be invoked for pacifying all the *bālagraha,*[33] which indicate the original place of this goddess among the people of lower strata of the society, who was propitiated to avert her power of death and disease. According to *Brahmāṇḍa Purāna* Sakuni and Pūtanā, being daughters of Bali belonged to the *asura* class.[34] The *Purāṇa* also mentions Tāmasī Pūtanā, Revatī, Śakuni and Ayomukhī who gave birth to thousands of *rākṣasa*s, who wander during the two *sandhyā* times (i.e., morning and evening), and cause troubles to children. Skanda is mentioned as the leader of all these *bālagraha*s.[35]

The works on *Āyurveda* like *Suśruta Saṁhitā, Caraka Saṁhitā, Aṣṭāṅga Saṁgraha* and *Kāśyapa Saṁhitā* (also known as *Vṛddha-Jīvakīya Tantra,* i.e., the text of Jīvaka the senior) ascribed to Kuṣāṇa times, contain copious information regarding the tradition of the *bālagraha*. According to U.P. Shah, "*Suśruta* and other medical treatises possibly drew their information from the traditions which go as far back as the Vedic literature. (*Khila-Khaṇḍa* of *Ṛgveda*, and the *Gṛhyasūtras*)".[36] In the *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, Skanda is regarded as the foremost of the *bālagraha* (*grahādhipati*), who inflict diseases upon children. The other names in the list are Viśākhā, Revatī, Mukhamaṇḍikā, Pūtanā, Andhapūtanā, Śītapūtanā, Śakuni and Naigameṣā.[37] V.S. Agrawala opines that the story of these *graha*s being directed by Skanda to devour the young children from such families, where gods, manes, brāhmaṇa, saints, teachers and guests are not honoured, indicate that the *graha*s were allotted a place in folk religion, outside the pale of Vedic and *Smārta* rites.[38]

According to U.P. Shah, *Suśruta Saṁhitā* is the first work to give us the iconography of these *grahas*.[39] The whole section (from *adhyāya* 27 to 38) of the *Uttaratantra* is called *Kumārabhṛtyatantra* or the treatise dealing with diseases of children which is one of the eight *aṅga*s of ancient Indian medical literature. Symptoms of the diseases caused by such *bālagraha* as well as their treatment including fumigation, oils, baths, oblations, etc., are given, in different *adhyāyas*. The text records the *rakṣā-mantra* (protective charms) against each *graha* and invoke protection, and gives a short description of the particular *bālagraha*.[40]

Similarly, *Caraka Saṁhitā* and the *Aṣṭāṅga Saṁgraha* preserve informations regarding the *graha* spreading diseases among children. According to the latter Śiva created twelve spirits as attendants of Guha-Skanda of whom five are male and seven female. This list includes Naigameṣā, Pūtanā and Śakuni.[41] In both *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* and *Aṣṭāṅga Saṁgraha,* the total number of *bālagraha* are raised form nine to twelve. U.P. Shah points out that the former gives almost the same iconography of *bālagraha* and quotes verbatim the verses of the *Suśruta Saṁhitā*.

On the basis of internal evidences, U.P. Shah has assigned a date not latter than c. AD 300-400 for *Kāśyapa Saṁhitā*.[42] In the chapter on *Bālagraha-Cikitsā* we find a discussion on the children's diseases caused by the influence of evil spirits. In its *Revatikalpa* chapter, sixteen demonesses are mentioned who, in turns destroy a child from the first day of its birth.[43] This chapter also contains an account of the origin of Revatī and Ṣaṣṭhī.

The four known plastic depiction of the theme of origin of Skanda belong to Kuṣāṇa period and perhaps remain as the only exceptional cases in the entire history of Indian art. It is significant to note that the potential for further elaboration and development of the theme was not explored, which possibly suggests the significance of the theme at the historical point of acculturation, some time during the Kuṣāṇa period. Possibly, it is also due to the change that occurred in the cultic affiliation of Skanda, who eventually got incorporated into the Śiva's family, with which the origin myth of the god receiving only a relegated position in the changed schema of the relationships.

The representation of therianthropic Mātṛkā sculptures of Kuṣāṇa period, hailing from Mathura, comprises of Mātṛkās represented either in the context of Skanda's birth or independent of it. In both the instances they are portrayed either singly or in groups of varying numbers. Other than the Mātṛkās, a major component in the representation of the birth of Skanda is the presence of a jar portrayed along with the emerging young god (*Pl*. 4). N.P. Joshi and R.C. Agrawala, on the basis of *Mahābhārata* references conclusively identify the object as *svarṇakuṇḍa*.[44] In the story of Skanda's birth as narrated in the text, Svāhā impersonates as the wives of the seven sages and makes love with Agni. Svāhā, assuming the form of a *gāruḍī* bird, threw the seed of Agni into a golden lake on the peak of white mountain. The seed generated a son, Skanda. The jar in the representations of the birth of Skanda is thus interpreted as portraying the golden lake, (into which Svāhā as *gāruḍī* bird threw the seed of Agni).

According to the *Śiva Purāṇa*[45] version of the story, Agni unable to control his passion for the wives of the seven sages, and having no opportunity to seduce them, fashions their images. Desiring them more and more he placed his seed in a golden pot, and assuming the form of a *gāruḍī* bird, brought it to the peak of the white mountain, where a child was born form it. The meaning of the jar in sculptural representations can be interpreted either as connoting the lake in which Svāhā deposited the seed of Agni, or as the golden pot in which Agni placed his seed. The latter interpretation seems more plausible. Yet it may be noted that throughout the Indian sculptural tradition the jar (*ghaṭa*), symbolically denotes waters — either a lake, a river or sea.[46] In all the known four representations of the theme the jar is present. In accordance with the different versions of the story of Skanda's birth, wherein the seed of Agni/Śiva is connoted as being stored either in the lake, golden jar or in the river.

Since the figure above the jar hold a spear in the left hand, (ref. Govt. Museum, Mathura, No. 15-1179), it can be conclusively identified as representing Skanda. The particular mode of depiction is significant, because this is the most pertinent feature derived from the myth, and conclusively indicate identification to be that of the origin of Skanda. Among the four known depictions of the theme the above sculpture is the only exceptional representation showing this feature. It is significant that unlike the other three, this particular example does not depict Skanda in full figure standing next to the left of the jar. In portrayals where this is preferred, the details on the top of the jar are unclear. But, in one of them the head of a ram can be clearly discerned, (*Pl.* 4) whereas in the other two examples due to weathering this feature is obliterated.

The ram's head over the jar is a notable feature. N.P. Joshi, after pointing out the uncertainty of the meaning of the ram's head, mentions three references which indicate its association with Skanda and concludes that, "It still remains a problem as to why it should appear on the jar".[47] All the three references, are form *Mahābhārata*. Firstly, ram was offered to Skanda by Agni.[48] Secondly, Agni himself is said to have had assumed the form of the goat-headed 'toy' Naigameṣā, to amuse Skanda,[49] and thirdly, that among the different faces of the deity, the sixth face is that of a ram, and this very face is most worthy to be honoured.[50] However, it can be suggested that this mode of representation of ram's head over the jar can indicate it to be Skanda, since in one place instead of ram's head the emerging deity is noticed, which rules out the possibilities suggested by N.P. Joshi. And further, the representation of Skanda with the head a of goat is corroborated in *Mahābhārata*. According to this the middle face among the six faces is described as that of a goat and is mentioned to be most superior and the *Lokamātā*s are said to be always worshipping this face.[51]

The corresponding identity between the head of a ram and Skanda, lead us to another inter-relationship between this tutelary deity and Harinegameṣin. It is a very well established fact, (supported by the literary and plastic evidences) that the latter has been always portrayed as a ram-faced deity. This son granting deity of *Ṛgveda*, according to Winternitz[52] is an aspect of Skanda Kārttikeya which is also attested by evidences noticed in epics and the *Purāṇa*s. In the *Liṅga Purāṇa*, Śiva is described as surrounded by his four sons—*Naigameyādi* (i.e., Naigameya and others).[53] Kanchan Sinha mentions the *Purāṇa* tradition as having developed the *vyūha* of the four Skanda gods in which Skanda and Naigameya are the two forms other than Śākhā and Viśākhā.[54] The *Kumārabhṛtya Tantra* of the *Suśruta Saṁhitā* while discussing *bālagraha*s, presents Skanda, Vaiśākha and Naigameṣā as the three among the nine *graha*s.[55]

It may be noted that the above references of interchangeable identity of Naigameṣā and Skanda which could be quoted for interpreting the representation of the head of a ram in Skanda's origination from the jar, however is not attested by any similar references in *Mahābhārata*. At the same time, the synoptic mode of sculptural narration in no way lent itself to be considered as solely derived from *Mahābhārata*. Considering the above points it is merely a conjecture to surmise that the visual narratives are based on a certain earlier version of the myth, which has come down to us in distorted form.[56]

In the depictions of the birth of Skanda the attending therianthropic Mātṛkās are noticed either singly or in group. In all the known depictions of the theme they are invariably present and the divinity and the protection granting disposition of the Mātṛkā deities and Kārttikeya are obvious since the right hands of the figures are in *abhaya-hasta*. In the Lucknow Museum example (*Pl.* 4), the single animal faced Mātṛkā is seated in *godohikāsana* immediately next to the standing Kārttikeya, though she has an uncouth animal face, she exudes an appeased condition. Whereas the wide thick lips, the joined eye-brows and the raised ears, reveal her original malevolent nature, the child in the lap, held by the left hand, the full rounded breasts, the adornments and the raised right hand in *abhaya-hasta,* her motherhood and protective power. N.P. Joshi on the basis of *Mahābhārata* reference, designates her as belonging to the *aśiva* group of mothers,[57] which he later modifies as the (*ugra*) form of Revatī on the basis of the lists of Mātṛkās found in the *Mahābhārata, Purāṇa*s and the works on *Āyurveda*. However, the author mentions that, "in the field of sculpture it is difficult to pin-point any image of Revatī in this form, (i.e., *ugra*), but she could be one among the Mātṛkās bearing the faces of lion, tiger, etc. with rolling eyes, and wide spread mouth either with Skanda (as in *Pl.* 4) or without him".[58] R.C. Agrawala identifies the figure under consideration as a goat-headed Mātṛkā, and designates her either as Hāritī or as the female counterpart of the goat-headed Naigameṣā.[59] This identifications do not hold credibility if the *Mahābhārata* references are taken into consideration. In the light of this text, the figure could be either the Mātṛkā who emerges out of the fury of *Lokamātā*s, or the goddess Lohitāyanī, the blood drinking cruel daughter of red sea who later turns out to be protective towards Skanda, as her child.[59] It may also be noted that in such a synoptic narration, the sculptor has created an iconic image, suggestive of the transformation from the cruel militancy to the benign aspect, symptomatic of the acculturation of the female gender and of the original class orientation of the tutelary deity; a parallel process to be considered in the Saptamātṛkā 'representations' as well. This may further indicate that the meaning of the fully humanized goddesses in the other sculptural examples of the myth suggests the pervasive aspect of acculturation.

Apart from the stone reliefs depicting a single Mātṛkā figure in the context of Skanda's birth, Mātṛkās in a group are also noticed. Among the four Mātṛkās depicted in one such example, (*Pl.* 5) the one near Skanda has a distinct human face while the other three have animal faces, discernible as that of a cat and a lion. The posture and gestures of these figures are the same as that of the one discussed previously. The sculptures of independent therianthropic Mātṛkās, without the context of Skanda's origin myth, suggest their autonomous cultic bearing. (*Pl.* 6) From the available evidence, their independent status outside the emerging Skanda cult can be presumed.

The terracotta tradition of therianthropic mother goddess in of the Kuṣāṇa period from Mathura becomes significant in this context. (*Pl.*8) These 'timeless' variety of terracotta sculptures are crude, having simplified limbs with relatively simple ornamentation, definitely derive from the lower strata of the society. Their physiognomical specificity indicate concern with fertility. While this is so the sinister animal faces of these beings suggest malevolent nature. While the contemporary accultured neo-Brāhmanical depictions of therianthropic Mātṛkās in stone are contextualised in relation to Skanda, the terracotta images cannot be studied within any such relationship. The terracotta mother goddesses are represented singly, the only exception being the group of Mātṛkās shown as seated on the votive tanks belonging to Kuṣāṇa period.[61]

Independent of Skanda, the stone images depicting therianthropic Mātṛkā in groups are also seated in *godohika* postures, with the children on their lap. In comparison with the terracotta images, the *abhaya-hasta* held by each one of them testifies their divine nature within the higher religious realm to which they belong. One such example from Mathura Museum (*Pl.* 6) has five Mātṛkās in it. (The other similar slab reliefs, No. 929 and No. 1002 in Mathura Museum have two and three Mātṛkās respectively). These sinister looking Mātṛkās are described as belonging to *aśiva* group of Mothers referred to in *Mahābhārata*.[62] The faces of some of the Mātṛkā from the collective bear bird like features. Going by the relevant literary sources, two *bālagraha*s are described as having the form of birds. The *Suśruta Saṁhitā* calls the fierce Śakuni who moves in the sky, a bird with sharp beak and protruding mouth.[63] *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa* describes Śakuni, a bird roaring like a tiger, flapping her wings in anger and moving in the dead of the night.[64] The *Mahābhārata* calls her a *pakṣiṇī* moving at nights, extremely cruel to the children and dreadful to look at. She is described as dirty (*malina*), clad in filthy clothes, having bad odour (*sudūrgandha*) bearing rough hair, as very unpleasant and as residing in uninhabitated places. Śakuni is described as adorned with ornaments, with a downward face, a sharp nose, tawny eyes, nails (*śaṅku*) and wedge-like long ears. She has a large belly and huge body, is difficult to look at, and her voice is said to be equally terrifying.[65] In the sculptural panel referred to above (*Pl.*6), two bird-faced images can be discerned, but it is nearly impossible to identify which one of them is Śakuni or Pūtanā. N.P. Joshi opines that, "the iconographic features of Pūtanā and Śakuni are very much similar and it is difficult to distinguish the two in the realm of Kuṣāṇa sculptures".[66] Further discussion on other *bālagraha*, like Śītapūtanā, Andhapūtanā, etc. similarly would not be of any purpose. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that in some of the panels representing Pūtanā-*vadha* by Kṛṣṇa, this demoness is depicted as a bird.[67]

Harinaigameṣin (Skt.) or Harinegameṣī (Pkt.) and Bālagraha

The cultic and the iconographical features of the tutelary deity Harinaigameṣin have been discussed by scholars like Buhler, V.A. Smith, V.S. Agrawala, C.J. Shah, Pandit Becaradasa and U.P. Shah.[68] What remain partially unexplored in these is the interrelationships and the commonality of elements in the tradition of Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkās and the Jain sectarian beliefs, both of which proves the point of acculturation of 'popular' worship of deities related to the well-being of children. The god-head Harinaigameṣin, according to Jain sources is very well-known as the presiding deity related to pregnancy and birth. The texts which post-dates the Digaṁbara-Śvetāmbara schism, as quoted by various scholars, indicate the acculturation of the deity into Śvetāmbara Jain beliefs from 'popular' tradition, in the context of the legitimization of the kṣatriya origin of Mahāvīra. The myth informs that, Śakra who came to realize thorough his *avadhi-jñāna* that Mahāvīra has entered into the womb of the brāhmaṇa Devananda, unable to find a single instance of an *arhat*, *cakravartin, baladeva* or *vāsudeva* born in low, poor, degraded and brāhmaṇa families, (for indeed, "Arhats . . . are born in high families . . . belonging to the race of Ikṣvāku, or in other such-like families of pure descent on both sides)",[69] resorts to Harinaigameṣin, the divine commander and controller of infants. The tutelary deity transforms himself with magical power, casts Devananda into deep sleep, and transfers the fetus from Devananda to the womb of kṣatriya woman Triśalā.[70]

The evidence contained in the second *skanda* of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, suggests that the story of transfer is a later interpolation, and indicate the historical point of acculturation of the deity Harinaigameṣin. U.P. Shah points out that Digaṁbara Jains do not believe in the myth of the transfer of the embryo and simply states that Mahāvīra was born of a kṣatriya lady.[71] It is significant that the *Kalpasūtra* account of the myth stresses greatly upon the hatred of Śvetāmbara Jains towards *brāhmaṇa* caste, which also enabled the process of acculturation of Harinaigameṣin into the Śvetāmbara sect of Jainism.

Apart from the details known about the acculturation of the deity from the context of the origin of Mahāvīra, a fund of other literary evidences are available proving the earlier 'popular' base of the deity. U.P. Shah relates one story thus : "a certain lady called Sulasa who was told in her childhood that she would deliver still-born children. Sulasa started worshipping (the image of) Harinegameṣī, who was so pleased with her that he arranged to see that Devakī and herself would bear children at the same time and to transfer the still-born children to Devakī and bring the latter's healthy sons, six in number, to Sulasa. Later on when Devakī knew this after a lapse of several years, she became dejected. At the birth of her seventh son Kṛṣṇa, she retired to a 'Posdhaśāla', fasted and propitiated the god Harinegameṣī from whom he obtained a boon for the eighth son of Devakī".[72]

Another instance of the propitiation of this deity is narrated by *Vāsudevahiṇḍi.*[73] In order to obtain a son for Satyabhāmā, equal to Pradyumna, Kṛṣṇa worships Negameṣī. The deity grants a boon along with a necklace to be given to the queen. U.P. Shah mentions that the same story is repeated in the *Nemināthacarita,*which is also quoted by Buhler and Agrawala. Harinegameṣī is referred to in the *Sthānaṅga Sūtra*, where he is mentioned as one of the seven commanders of the army of Śakra.[74]

Referring to three *mantra*s from the *Ṛgveda*, which are used in the *sīmamtonnayan* ceremony (the rite performed for obtaining healthy sons) as shown in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, and *Sānkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*,[75] U.P. Shah establishes the antiquity of the worship of Harinaigameṣin. He further elaborates that the same verses are also prescribed by *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*. The god is invoked in the following words : "O Nejamesa ! Fly away, and fly hither again, bringing a beautiful son; to my wife here, who is longing for a son, grant them an embryo and that a male one".[76] According to these sources, Vedic Nejamesa is a son-granting deity, and not a demon dangerous to children, which indicate an early stage of acculturation of the deity during the later Vedic period. But, according to the sources of later period, such as the medical treatise like *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, Naigameṣa is one of the tutelary deities in the pantheon of Skanda, with malevolent associations. As per this text a disease in pregnant woman was called *naigameṣarata,* in which the fetus ceased to throb in the womb as if the life has ceased to exist, making the abdomen inflated or compressed.[77] According to V.S. Agrawala the term, *naigameṣapahṛtta*, refers to the exploit of the god in transferring the embryo.[78]

Harinegameṣī, is generally interpreted as Negameṣī of Hari, i.e., Negameṣī, the servant of Indra.[79] The *Kumārabhṛtya Tantra*, while elaborating on the ways and means to counteract the evil effects of Naigameṣa, describes the deity as goat-headed (*ajānana*).[80] V.S. Agrawala points out the association of goats with the ceremonies related to child birth in the popular religions. He quotes the instance in *Kādambarī* where, as part of the birth ceremonies of Prince Candrāpīḍa, a grown up goat was brought and tied at the door of the *sūtikagṛha* at the time of the Ṣaṣṭhī *pūjā.*[81] In his study on *Vāmana Purāṇa*, V.S. Agrawala opines that the name Naigameya, was derived form *naigama* which implies that the god was worshipped by the merchant class.[82]

The cult icons of Harinaigameṣin are found to have been solely made during the Kuṣāṇa period , though his story related to the origin of Mahāvīra continues among Śvetāmbara Jains. No separate image of the deity seems to have been installed in Jain temples after Kuṣāṇa period. (U.P. Shah mentions the representation of the deity in the life story of Mahāvīra at Kumbharia temple in North Gujarat).[83] Naigameṣa also appears in the manuscript paintings of *Kalpasūtra* narrations from Western India.[84] Probably the cult images of the deity from Mathura are exclusive and were made during the high point of Śvetāmbara-Digaṁbara schism, or possibly could have continued for some more time. As referred previously, the literary data prove the original 'popular' strata base of the deity. These 'popular' beliefs adopted by the Jain Śvetāmbara faction differentiated themselves from the opponent, and lent them a certain distinct identity. The opinion of V. S. Agrawala that Naigameṣa had been taken out of the orbit of the Jain religion and had been made popular as the presiding deity of children amongst all classes of people, does not seem to be true.[85] A point to be considered in this regard is that the earlier Jain texts contained evidence of the worship of other deities for obtaining children, the place of which during the schism got solely taken over by Harinaigameṣin. In the *Nāyadhammakahāo,*[86] for example, Bhadrā, the wife of a merchant called Dhanya, worships images of Nāgas, Bhūtas, Indra, Skanda, Rudra, Śiva, Yakṣas and Vaiśravaṇa for obtaining a son. In the *Vipāka Sūtra*[87] we find another lady worshipping the image of Umbaradatta Yakṣa and a third propitiating the Saurika Yakṣa with the same intention. During Kuṣāṇa times, the deity Harinaigameṣin is singled out and given a very prominent place, mainly due to the incorporation of the deity into the story of the transfer of the fetus of Mahāvīra.

Harinaigameṣin is represented as goat-faced in the relief sculpture from the Kankali Tila, Mathura (*Pl.* 7). Seated in *mahārājalīlāsana* on a high throne, and holding a cornucopia in the right hand, on his left side are the three female figures and a nude male child. The figure whose lower portion of the body is broken off, carries a child lying in a tray. Below the image of Harinaigameṣin is preserved a fragmentary label — *bhagava nemeso,* carved in the characters of the Kuṣāṇa period, which is a conclusive evidence for the identification. The slab is broken off to the immediate right of the deity, and hence any firm identification of the narrative story is inconclusive. Buhler interprets that the nude child standing near the left foot of the god as Tīrthaṅkara. Further, it has been assumed that the relief under discussion, represents the legend of the transfer of the embryo from Devanada to Triśalā.[88] U.P. Shah opines that the evidence for the actual transfer of Mahāvīra in the frieze is inconclusive and suggests that it may be referring to the disease, when the fetus ceased to throb in the womb, and after the propitiation of Naigameṣin, the normal condition of the child in the womb is restored.[89] On the reverse side of the frieze female dancers are depicted, which support the contention of U.P. Shah, since the Jain texts speak of the rejoicing followed after the mother felt the movement of the fetus.

The other known sculptures from Mathura are iconic representations of the deity. These feature the deity in frontal standing position, along with children frolicking around. In one example the children are shown in *añjali-mudrā*, and in certain other, children sit on both the shoulders of the deity and are seen pulling the horns, all of which indicate the benevolent nature of the god-head. Further, in all the known standing images of the deity, the right hand is invariably in *abhaya-hasta* and the left in *kātyāvalaṁbita* position. In none of the iconic portrayals, the story of the transfer of Mahāvīra's embryo is suggested.

What is of specific relevance in the analysis of iconography of Harinaigameṣin is the question of the possible parallelism between the female form of this deity (*Pls.* 9 & 10) and that of

Saptamātṛkā tradition. According to the literary sources the deity is conclusively a male and no reference to his female form is known. Despite this absence, V.S. Agrawala had identified the goat-faced female images of Kuṣāṇa period as the female counterpart of Harinaigameṣin.[90] The images of human faced female deity with dangling goat like earlobes, is also considered as the counterpart of Harinaigameṣin. Enumerating the Ahicchatra terracotta sculptures, he classifies them into four categories; 1. Naigameṣin carrying a child on either shoulders. 2. Same god portrayed without children. 3. Goat-headed goddess, interpreted as the counterpart of Naigameṣin. 4. Female figure with human face interpreted also as female counterpart of Naigameṣin. To quote, "in the stone sculptures from Mathura, we have a male god, his female counterpart, both goat-headed and thirdly a human-faced woman, all representing the male or female counterpart of the same god". The date ascribed to these Ahicchatra terracottas is *c*. AD 450 to 650, from which Agrawala concludes that these follow the formula evolved at Mathura during second-third century AD. U.P. Shah, in the light of the evidence in the medical treatises, disagrees with V.S. Agrawala and interprets these sculptures as one or the other of the *bālagraha*.[91] He designates the female figure with long ears as a form of Śakuni who is called *śaṅku-karnai* by Suśruta, or more generally as an earlier form of Revatī. Thus, the Mathura female deities with human faces (*Pl*. 11) may be Ṣaṣṭhī or Revatī in their earlier iconographic stage or a beautiful goddess such as Mukhamaṇḍikā. Female figures with goat head has tentatively been identified as Revatī, since the evidence of *Kāśyapa Saṁhitā* seems to suggest that all other female *graha* have evolved after her, and because Revatī as Ṣaṣṭhī being the first or closest associate of Skanda, her type evolved from that of Naigameṣin.[92]

If we consider that the possibility of an instance of change in the sexual identity of Harinaigameṣin from male to female can occur in the sculptural practices of Kuṣāṇa period, (which however, is unrecorded in the relevant literary sources), the rational of the same calls for notice. If the above contention can be proved right, it can be suggested to be a prefiguration of *mātṛkā* concept, with an implication upon the historical development of the aspect of dichotomous male-female personality of the goddesses. At the same time the proposition right at the outset remains nullified, since the female Harinaigameṣin do not imply the *śakti*-potential of the male counterpart. Yet, if the idea of female Harinaigameṣin really existed, it has to be recognized that none of the other male deities related to the *bālagraha* tradition are represented in female forms, at least during the Kuṣāṇa period, though subsequently the *śakti*-forms (e.g. Kaumārī) are invented in the context of Saptamātṛkā conceptualization. It is significant that none of the male deities associated with Kuṣāṇa *bālagraha* tradition are portrayed along with children, which is a major distinguishing factor of the female deities in the same tradition. It may be considered relevant that the functions of children's diseases and protection, due to the biological capacity of giving birth, was primarily attributed to the goddesses. However, Harinaigameṣin is a male deity represented along with children, though in a way that is quite distinct from the female goddesses who are shown with a child. Hence, it may be argued that, this special aspect of the deity enabled the sculptural invention of the feminine form of the deity. If such a process was incidental, without any significant theological bearing, the absence of literary support can be understood.

Yet, it is pertinent that, Harinaigameṣin in mythology is specifically narrated as the child-granting and protective deity. Whereas in the mythology of the origin of Skanda, and of various Mātṛkās there is no reference specifying the role comparable to him. Further, Skanda in the Āyurvedic treatises, is a *bālagraha* and is not ascribed with the specific function of child granting. On the other hand, Harinaigameṣin is a deity worshipped from the later Vedic times as the child granting deity and the development of his representation in the female form can be considered as an extended corollary.

Hāritī, Kubera and Lakṣmī

The deification of Hāritī from the child devouring ogress to that of a benign protector of children, in the Buddhist religion, comparable to the child granting Harinaigameṣin of Jainism, are symptoms of large scale acculturations which have implications upon the history of classes in ancient India. The *Mahābhārata* description of the various groups of Mātṛkās who were appointed to kill Skanda, who later attended and nursed him, also reflect such assimilations by the major higher religious movements. Due to the upward mobility and standardisation within the higher religious systems, their local and regional characteristics assumed universal traits, obliterating the older associations. J.N. Banerjea opines that, "they probably existed in the nature of different diseases . . . in them can be seen the personification of different diseases and epidemics".[93] The incorporation of Hāritī into Buddhist pantheon, with a specific function and with a special shrine and share of food allotted to her in the monastery, are all part of these processes. According to R.N. Misra, the Hāritī legend is but a standardized version of a stock belief in such popular deities.[94]

The origin and development of Hāritī worship and the cult images, have many distinguishing features in comparison with the other deities related to the well-being of children. However, this goddess being the protectress of children, a study of the sculptures representing this deity is consistent with the general development of Mātṛkā tradition. A major difference with regard to her worship is the wider distribution of her images which are found at widely located centres, wherever Buddhism had spread and flourished. Moreover throughout the development of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, which is spread over a long period of time, the images of this deity continued to be made, which proves the place of importance of the cult related to the deity within Buddhism.

In the Kuṣāṇa period, Hāritī is represented either singly or along with Kubera. Whatever might be the interpretation of her specific cult associations, the deity is always encumbered with children in a benign attitude. R.N. Misra points out that the image type of Hāritī with Pañcikā, could not retain its characteristic feature, and underwent a change in the regional schools Indian art, where Hāritī was readily converted into Bhadrā, Lakṣmī or Vasudharā and Pañciķā took on the appearance of Kubera or Jambhāla.[95]

Though Hāritī is portrayed predominantly as a benign goddess in Kuṣāṇa sculptures, one sculpture hailing from Bhuteswara Tila, preserved in the Government Museum, Mathura (*Pl.* 12), depicts her in the dreadful aspect. Only the lower part of the figure is preserved. Seated in *pralambapādāsana* on a high throne, the child in the lap of the goddess is placed in a manner quite unlike other representations of the mother and child. The sculpture depicts the goddess inflicting the child with fingers poked into its mouth, as if about to tear it off. This, with reference to her habit of eating up children, enables the identification of it as Hāritī. No other known sculpture of the goddess represents her in this manner, and hence the identification remains tentative. Another sculptural representation of Hāritī, hailing form Tayapur (*Pl.* 13) is of the most common type. Seated in *godohikāsana*, a baby is shown in her lap, held by the left hand. On the highly weathered pedestal can be seen children frolicking. A significant cult association is established with the presence of Kubera, who carries a wine cup and a money purse.

There are a large number of sculptural reliefs depicting Kubera and Mātṛkās in varying numbers. N.P. Joshi records twenty-three such examples.[96] Most elaborate, in terms of the number of deities represented in a single relief is the one which depicts Kubera and three mothers together. (State Museum, Lucknow, No. 0.241) The identity of the two goddesses seated next to Kubera is not clear, whereas the figure on the extreme right is Lakṣmī.[97] Holding a lotus in the left hand, the right hand, as in the case of all other figures in the group show *abhaya-hasta*. Another relief hailing from Manoharpur (*Pl.* 14) represents three deities together. On the extreme right is Kubera, with Laksmī next to him . The figure on the extreme left is Hāritī, since she carries a wine cup in the left hand. The distinct portrayals of Lakṣmī and Hāritī, make it possible to discern their specific meaning and significance regarding cultic affiliation.

A typological variation of such sculptural composition is observed, when one of the deities is given more prominence than the others. In one such example (State Museum, Lucknow, No. 0.210), Kubera and a goddess, probably Hāritī, are depicted flanking Lakṣmī. The larger central figure sits on a high pedestal. The goddess holds a full blown stalked lotus in the left hand and the right hand is in *abhaya-hasta*. In yet another variation of the similar composition, preserved in State Museum, Lucknow, few devotees are shown on the right, and Kubera and another male figure portrayed on the left side of the centrally placed Lakṣmī. These sculptures prove the cultic affiliation of Śrī-Lakṣmī with Kubera and Hāritī. Lakṣmī's higher status within the cultic association is obvious. Kubera and Lakṣmī are deities of wealth and prosperity and personifies money and agricultural production respectively.

Coomaraswamy has pointed out that the general character of the *yakṣa* type includes universal deities like Kubera, Kāmadeva and Śrī.[98] Moti Chandra referring to *Śrī-Sūkta* maintains that Lakṣmī was only a synonym of Śrī, and Lakṣmī perhaps originally stood for a separate divinity, personifying luck and prosperity and later on conceived as the goddess of gold and wealth. But, as a corn goddess her functions are similar to that of Śrī with whom she is equated.[99] It may be remembered that at Bharhut, Sirimadevata is presented in the company of other Yakṣinīs. In the Kuṣāṇa period, Lakṣmī also assumes the role of a progenitive goddess.

The sculpture which represents the single figure of Lakṣmī, (*Pl.* 15) in *godohikāsana*, holds a child in the lap. The full-blown stalked lotus rising above the left shoulder of the figure, confirms the identification. The figure of Śrī-Lakṣmī holding a child in the lap obviously suggests the protective motherly aspect of the goddess. In the context of the association of Lakṣmī and Kubera, it can imagined that their collective association possibly enhanced the potential for their common worship, for they represented fertility of the earth and women, and wealth in terms of money; things appropriated by the upwardly mobile classes from the agricultural producers and women.

Conclusion

The divine feminine sphere during Kuṣāṇa period is heterogeneous and these in their totality are too vast to be considered within the scope of the present study. The attempt herein primarily had been to define the personalities of the goddess in the context of singling out the motif of mother and child, so as to iconologically trace the later 'representation' of Saptamātṛkā in sculptural portrayals as mothers.

That the *bālagraha* tradition, with its diverse ramifications, played a pivotal role in the formation of the motif of mother and child in the Kuṣāṇa period, has been discussed. The study of Skanda, Harinaigameṣin, the varied tutelary Mātṛkā goddesses, Hāritī, Kubera and Śrī-Lakṣmī, though distinct in their contextual specificities, prove the commonality and certain distinctiveness in their functions and meanings within the concern over the need of progeny and its protection, fertility, wealth and auspiciousness. Significantly, among the multifarious sources that enabled the origination of the Purāṇic Saptamātṛkā concept during the post-Kuṣāṇa period, the *bālagraha* tradition was a major source, (theologically and iconographically) which lent for the prototype of the motif of the mother and child in the later stages. This motif in Kuṣāṇa art, as an iconographical prefiguration, links the two traditions on the basic ground of formal artistic mediation. The theological mediation possibly pre-dates this, since the evidence of skewed narration of the *Purāṇa* version of militancy of the seven goddesses and their appeased iconic 'representation' in the sculpture remain unattested in the early literary sources on the Saptamātṛkā. A detailed analysis of these awaits consideration in the last chapter.

It is pertinent to discuss here the figuring in of the seven goddesses in a group, accompanied by a male god, datable to the late Kuṣāṇa period, and hailing form Dhangaon (*Pl.* 16). The accompanying male figure is Skanda-Kārttikeya, unlike the later standard presentation of Gaṇeśa and Śiva in the proper Saptamātṛkā groups. The seven female figures stand with their left hands positioned down, carrying water pots, and the right hands impart *abhaya*. Another sculptural relief (*Pl.* 17), broken on the left, represents five seated female figures accompanied by Skanda on the extreme right. The female figures are seated in *pralambapādāsana* while the attending Skanda stands. The right hands of all the figures bestow *abhaya*. Significantly none of the deities has a *vāhana* accompanying them, nor do they have any other differentiative attributes. Therefore their identities remain confusing. According to V.S. Agrawala, the former represents the earliest form of the seven divine mothers or the Saptamātṛkā, presented as ordinary female figures, without any distinguishing marks.[100]

The evolution from the Kuṣāṇa period conceptions of varied Mātṛkās to the Gupta and post-Gupta Saptamātṛkā has been taken as a 'natural' process by several scholars. As has been seen earlier, the *bālagraha* tradition is one of the primary currents in the Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā tradition and as such, conceptually, has very little to do with the later tradition of Saptamātṛkā. It is a process of shift; a rupture encompassing a totally different meaning level, which render the latter as the *śakti* embodiments of the gods in assisting *Deva*s in their war against the *Asura*s. The discontinuity of *bālagraha* tradition after Kuṣāṇa period, absent by evidence among the sculptural sources, however cannot be a strong enough argument in proving the transformation of the Kuṣāṇa tradition into that of the Saptamātṛkā. At the same time the interconnectedness, and continuity, if at all present, is to be considered taking note of the comparative iconographical features, particularly the schema of motherhood. The presence of children in association with the goddesses in these distinct traditions, links up the two fundamentally on the basis of iconographical rendering. At the same time the significance and meaning of the motherhood in the two traditions differ totally in accordance with the distinct functions and meanings.

The Saptamātṛkā-worship originates and evolves within the *Śākta* religion, rationalized through the 'high' theology, and at par with Aṁbikā/Durgā and Pārvatī. The Kuṣāṇa mothers are the adopted tutelary deities from the 'low' cultures, accultured from the immediate materialistic concerns of the 'people' into the religious practices of the middle classes. The anxiety and the preoccupation with progeny; the propitiation of fertility and the warding away of forces inimical to children, have moulded the Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā tradition. Such upward mobility of *lokāyata* traditions included other local, 'low' deities, such as *Nāga*s and *Yakṣa*s, and in the process of acculturation they commanded respect and received offerings during the rituals from the various classes. Through these they where brought under the power of major religions, homogenizing and universalizing the minor traditions.

The chapters to follow analyze the crystallization of the concept and iconography of Saptamātṛkās. It is evident from the available representations that the goddesses in a group, beginning with Brahmāṇī, originate in sculptural portrayals during fifth century AD.

References

1. (a) V.S. Agrawala, *Ancient Indian Folk Cults,* Varanasi, 1970, English translation of *Prācīna Bhāratīya Loka Dharma,* Varanasi, 1964.
   (b) A Note on the God Naigameṣa, in *JUPHS,* Vol., Jan. & Dec. 1947, Part I & II.
   (c) Presiding Deity of Child-Birth Amongst the Jainas, *Jaina Antiquary*, II & IV. U.P. Shah has also taken into consideration various literary data while discussing Harinegameṣin in the context of *bālagraha* tradition. Harinegameṣin, in *JISOA*, Vol. XIX, 1952-53.

2. V.S. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1970, pp. 86-87.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 89.
4. (a) N.P. Joshi, "Two Mātṛkā Plaques in the State Museum, Lucknow", in *BMAUP* 1, March, 1968.

   (b) Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā sculptures in the Light of Literary References, paper presented in the international seminar on the *Art of the Kuṣāṇa Age*. State Museum, Lucknow, Dec. 1984.

   (c) *Mathura Sculptures,* Mathura, 1968.

   (d) *Catalogue of the Brāhmanical sculptures in the State Museum Lucknow,* (Part I), Lucknow, 1972.
5. (a) V.S. Agrawala, identified the arch-like canopy above the head of some of the Mātṛkā sculptures as that of Nāgahood. N.P. Joshi identifies them as canopy, *op.cit.*, 1968.

   (b) The male figure holding a spear and standing near the Mātṛkās was identified by V.S. Agrawala as *āyudhapuruṣa*. R.C. Agrawala corrects the identification as that of the representation of Kārtikeya, "Mātṛkā Reliefs in Early Indian Art", in *EW*, Vol. 2., Nos. 1-2, March-June, 1971.
6. R.C. Agrawala, *ibid.*
7. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.*, 1952-53.
8. J.N. Tiwari, *The Goddess Cult in Ancient India,* Delhi, 1985.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
10. Katherine Anne Harper, *Seven Hindu Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation*, New York, 1989.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
12. *Mahābhārata, Āraṇyaka Parvan,* compiled and translated in Hindi, by Dr. Sripada Damodar Satwelkar, Svadhya Mandal, Pardi, 1969, Vol. II, section II.
13. Wendy O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva,* New Delhi, 1973. The mythology of the birth of Skanda as found in different texts point out to the confused parentage of the god. The various versions of the story establish his parental relationship with Agni, Svāhā, Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnīs, Kṛttikās, Gaṅgā, Śiva and Pārvatī, at different stages of the development of the myth.
14. *Mahābhārata, Āraṇyaka Parvan,* 215, 14 to 20.
15. *Ibid.*, 215, 21.
16. *Ibid.*, 216, 1.
17. *Ibid.*, 216, 12, 13, 217, 2 to 4.
18. *Ibid.*, 216, 7, 8.
19. *Ibid.*, 217, 9, 10.
20. *Ibid.*, 219, 1 to 11.
21. *Ibid.*, 219, 14 to 35.
22. *Ibid.*, 2119, 36.
23. *Ibid.*, 219, 39.
24. *Ibid.*, 219, 40.
25. *Ibid.*, 219, 41, 42, 43, 44.
26. N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, 1984, p. 7.
27. *Skanda Purāṇa, Kumārika Khaṇḍa,* 29, 174-78.

28. *Ibid.*, 29, 175.
29. *Ibid.*, 29, 176-77.
30. *Vāmana Purāṇa, Kalyān Aṅk,* 57, 27-29.
31. N.P. Joshi, *op.cit.*, 1984, p. 11.
32. *Agni Purāṇa,* 299. 4950.
33. *Ibid.*, 299, 50.
34. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, Upodghāta,* 3,43.
35. *Ibid.*, 59. 1-15.
36. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.*, 1952-53, p. 28.
37. *Suśruta Saṁhitā, Uttaratantra, adhyāya* 28.13 and *adhyāya* 37.9.11, Published in two Vols. by Sastra Sahitya Vardhaka Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, 1948.
38. V.S. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, 1970, pp. 77-78.
39. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.*, 1952-53, p. 30.
40. *Suśruta Saṁhita, adhyāya* 37, as referred by U.P. Shah, *ibid.*, p.31.
41. *Aṣṭāṅga Saṁgraha* (published by Ganapat Kṛṣṇajī Press, 1888), *Uttarasthāna, adhyāya* III-IV, as referred by U.P. Shah, *ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
43. *Kāśyapa Saṁhitā* also known as *Vṛddha Jīvaka-Tantra,* Bombay, 1938, p. 154, as referred by U.P. Shah, *ibid.*, p. 35.
44. (a) N.P. Joshi, *op.cit.*, 1968, p. 20.
    (b) R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, 1971, p. 82.
45. *Śiva Purāṇa, Dharma Saṁhitā,* II.28-35.
46. It may be noted thȧt in some of the sculptural representations of the theme of *Samudramanthana*, the ocean of milk is represented symbolically with a jar.
47. N.P. Joshi, *op.cit.*, 1968, p. 20.
48. *Mahābhārata, Anuśāsana Parvan,* 86.33.
49. *Ibid., Vanaparvaan,* 226.29.
50. *Ibid.*, 228, 13-14.
51. *Ibid.*, 217, 12, 13.
52. M. Winternitz, *JRAS,* 1895, pp. 149-55.
53. *Liṅga Purāṇa,* 1.8.2.16.
54. Kanchan Sinha, *Kārttikeya in Indian Literature,* Delhi, 1979, p. 35.
55. *Suśruta Saṁhitā, Kumārabhṛtya Tantra,* 27.3.
56. N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, 1968, p. 20.
57. *Mahābhārata,* 228, 8-9, as referred to by N.P. Joshi, *ibid.*, p.19.
58. N.P. Joshi, *op.cit.*, 1984, p. 22.
59. R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, 1971, p. 82.
60. *Mahābhārata, Āraṇyaka Parvan,* 216, 21-22 and 219.39.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
62. R.C. Agrawala *op.cit.*, 1971, p. 81.
63. *Suśruta Saṁhitā, adhyāya,* 30, p. 1919.
64. *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa,* 6.22-24.

65. *Suśruta Saṁhitā, Uttara Tantra,* 30.2.
66. N.P. Joshi *op.cit.,* 1984, p. 27.
67. Krishna Deva mentions that representation of Pūtanā is found amalgamated with the episode of Śakaṭa-Bhañjana at Deogarh and Mandor. "It is to be noted that the *Mahābhārata* and *Harivaṁśa* preserve an older tradition, visualizing Pūtanā as a 'Śakuni' or bird . . . The avian representation of Pūtanā in the Gupta art, may indicate that some recension of *Harivaṁśa* was the literary text drawn upon by the concerned Gupta sculptors". Are there Regional Variation in the Plastic Representation of Kṛṣṇalīlā? article published in the book *Vaiṣṇavism in Indian Arts and Culture,* ed. by Ratan Parimoo, New Delhi, 1987).
68. (a) Buhler, "Specimens of Jaina sculptures from Mathura", in *Ep. Ind.*, Vol.II, p. 314.
    (b) V. A. Smith, *Jaina Stupa and Other Antiquities from Mathura,* p. 25, Pl. XVIII.
    (c) V.S. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, 1947, and also Catalogue of the images of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva in Mathura Art, in *JUPHS*, XXIII, p. 66.
    (d) C.J. Shah, *Jainism in Northern India,* 800 BC - AD 526, 1932.
    (e) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1952-53.
69. Jacobi, *Sacred Books of the East,* XXII, p. 225.
70. *Ibid., Kalpasūtra,* Vol. XXII.
71. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.*, 1952-53, p. 20.
72. *Antagaḍadasāo* (P.L. Vaidya's edition), pp. 18-24 as referred to by U.P. Shah, *ibid.*, p. 21.
73. *Vāsudevahiṇḍi,* I. p. 97.
74. *Sthānaṅga*, 7.3. Su, 582, Vol.II, p. 406, as referred to by U.P. Shah, 1952-53, p. 27.
75. (a) *Ṛgveda, Khila*, 30.1.
    (b) *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra,* I.14.3.
    (c) *Sāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra,* i.22.7. As referred by U.P. Shah, *ibid.*, pp. 22-23
76. *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra,* II.8. As referred by U.P. Shah, *ibid.*, p. 23.
77. *Suśruta Saṁhitā, Śarīrasthāna,* Ch. 10, V.55.
78. V.S. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, 1947.
79. Buhler, *Epigraphica Indica,* p. 316.
80. *Suśruta Saṁhitā, Kumārabhṛtya Tantra,* 26.3.9.
81. V.S. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1947.
82. V.S. Agrawala, *Vāmana Purāṇa — A Study,* Varanasi, 1964, p. 104.
83. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1952-53, p. 22, footnote l.
84. In paintings Harinegameṣī is represented with a goat's face, but sometimes he has the face of a horse. Generally in all two instances, he is shown carrying the fetus (*garbha*) of Mahāvīra, held reverently with both the hands. Ref.: Norman Brown, *Miniature Painting of the Kalpasūtra* (F.11,12,15).
85. V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.,* 1947, pp. 70-71.
86. *Nāyadhammakahāo* (ed. by N.V. Vaidya), p. 44 f, as referred to by U.P. Shah, *op. cit.,* 1952-53, p. 22.
87. *Vivāgasuyam* (*Muktikamāla-Jaina-Mohanamāla* No. 9.10), p. 72 ff. and p. 82 ff. As referred to by U.P. Shah, 1952-53, p. 22.
88. Buhler, *Epigraphica Indica,* Vol. II, p. 317.

89. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1952-53, p. 29.
90. V. S. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, 1947.
91. U.P. Shah, *op. cit.,* 1952-53, p. 37.
92. *Ibid.*
93. J.N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography,* Calcutta, 1956, p. 108.
94. R.N. Misra, *Yakṣa Cult and Iconography,* New Delhi, 1981, p. 75.
95. R.N. Misra, *ibid.,* p. 78.
96. N. P. Joshi, *op.cit.*, 1984, p .4.
97. N.P. Joshi, *op.cit.,* 1972, Fig. 515, p. 124, the identification of Kubera and Lakṣmī is acceptable to the scholar.
98. A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas,* II, Washington, 1928-31, p. 13.
99. Moti Chandra, "Studies in the Cult of the Mother Goddess in Ancient India", in *BPWM*, No. 12, 1973, pp. 15-16.
100. V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of Brāhmanical Images in Mathura Art*, Mathura, 1951. p. 59.

3

Saptamātṛkā Worship

Conceptions in Literary and Inscriptional Sources

The Heptad Traditions and Saptamātṛkā

THE myth of the genesis of Skanda in the *Āraṇyaka Parvan* of *Mahābhārata* establishes the emergence of Skanda cult in association with the heterogeneous Mātṛkā traditions. The same theme in the other relatively later texts such as *Śalya Parvan* of *Mahābhārata, Kumārika Khaṇḍa* of *Skanda Purāṇa, Vāmana Purāṇa, Agni Purāṇa* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, if read together, suggest an evolution and widening of the Skanda cult. On one hand this development of Skanda cult enabled the upward mobility and legitimization of the tutelary goddesses, and on the other, more importantly, Skanda began assuming a prominent place as a relatively more independent godhead status in the neo-Brāhmanical pantheon. At the same time, any further development of the tutelary goddess, on the grounds of theological rationalisation remained stultified, since their personalities were not viable enough to be considered for higher *Śākta* philosophical conceptions, such as that of *śakti, māyā* or *prakṛti*. Historically, these came to be associated with the older conceptions of Aṁbikā/Durgā, who were accultured into Brāhmanical religion in the late Vedic period, and now revived with a fresh vigour during the neo-Brāhmanical ideological consolidation.

The multiple parentage of Skanda, evident in the *Āraṇyaka Parvan* give way to relatively greater prominence of Śiva's parenthood, in the later period, as evident in the *Vāyu Purāṇa, Śiva Purāṇa, Brahma Purāṇa, Skanda Purạna* and *Varāha Purāṇa* versions of the myth.[1] For instance, the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, which is considered to be an early *Purāṇa* source, (dating between *ca.* AD 200-400)[2] contains the story of the birth of Skanda in the chapter on *Śrāddha*. According to this, when Agni interrupted the love making of Śiva and Rudrāṇī, the former is made to swallow Śiva's seed. Unable to bear the seed, Agni gave it to Gaṅgā, who kept the fetus until the time of delivery. The six Kṛttikās nursed the baby Skanda and he grew up under their care, and now most significantly Mātṛkā divinities (along with the hordes of *gaṇa, bhūta* and *pūtanā*) assist him in his war against Tārakāsura.[3] It can be inferred from the above version of the story that before fourth century AD the cults of Śiva and Skanda were getting amalgamated and Agni received a relegated role, in which he merely carried Śiva's seed to Gaṅgā. It is a fact to be noted that *Vāyu Purāṇa* does not mention Saptamātṛkās, and the above-mentioned Mātṛkā are possibly the deified goddesses who appeared in the context of the birth of Skanda in *Āraṇyaka Parvan*.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Kuṣāṇa tradition of tutelary Mātṛkā are fundamentally distinct from the later Saptamātṛkā divinities. However, in the legitimization process the latent Brāhmanical preoccupation with the auspicious conception of the number seven, conspicuously figure-in. The following account of the occurrence of seven as a prominent grouping of the tutelary and other goddesses in the *Āraṇyaka Parvan* support such a hypothesis. This would also suggest that the crystallization of the concept of seven *śakti* as a collective, forming the Saptamātṛkā conception is linked to this neo-Brāhmanical revival of the older Vedic concept of the mystic heptads, common to the Kuṣāṇa tradition and to that of Saptamātṛkā.

1. The *aśiva* Mātṛkās — Kākī, Hālimā, Mālinī, Brahmatā, Palalā, Āryā and Vaimitrā — are seven in all.[4]
2. The epithets of Devasena — Ṣaṣṭhī, Lakṣmī, Asā, Sukhapradā, Sadvṛttī, Aparājitā, Sinivālī and Kuhu — are eight. N.P. Joshi opines that Sinivālī and Kuhu are quite close to each other, hence the real number of names would be seven.[5]
3. The dreadful and ferocious Mātṛkās related to Skanda are also seven in number. They are, Revatī, Mukhamaṇḍikā, Vinatā, Pūtanā, Śītapūtanā, Lohitāyanī and Śaramā.[6]
4. The Kṛttikās are six in number but when sent to the skies, the group appeared as seven stars (*saptaśīrṣābham*).[7]
5. When Pārvatī approached to bless Skanda, she was accompanied by six others, namely, Gaurī, Vidyā, Gāndhārī, Keśinī, Mitrā and Sāvitrī.[8]

In the *Kumārika Khaṇḍa* of *Skanda Purāṇa,* along with Śākhā and Naigameṣā, who came out from the right side and the chest of Skanda, several girls also emerged, out of which only seven names are mentioned. They are Kākī, Hālimā, Rudrā, Vṛṣabhā, Āryā, Palalā, and Mitrā.[9]

From among the groups of goddesses who came to be associated with the birth of Skanda, the most important heptad conception, as far as the concept of Saptamātṛkās is concerned, are the Kṛttikās. Mythologically, they are the *Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnī*s, who get impregnated, deliver and subsequently offer maternal protection to Skanda. The detail of Svāhā's impersonation as the wives of Seven sages noticed in the *Mahābhārata* is omitted from most of the later versions, and yet the wives of seven sages remain important even in the later interpretations of the myth.[10] Wendy O'Flaherty, rationalizes the process thus, "The wives of the Seven Sages are the embodiments of charity and marital fidelity, and in spite of their involvement in the birth of Skanda, they are never actually seduced. When they become involved it is the result of a minor mistake (bathing, warming themselves before the fire, or drinking what they suppose to be water), or simple slander".[11]

The myth associated with Kṛttikās is of great antiquity. According to *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* Kṛttikās (the Pleiades) are the wives of the Bears (the constellation Ursa Major), for the seven sages in former times were called the *Sapta-Ṛṣi*. The Krttikās and their husbands were prevented from intercourse because the seven sages rise in the north and the Kṛttikās rise in the east. Hence, Agni is mentioned as their mate and it is with him that they have intercourse.[12] The association of Kṛttikās and Agni observed in the later Vedic literature, continues throughout the history of Indian culture.[13]

In classical Sanskrit literature, the Kṛttikās are regarded as six in number.[14] But the earlier tradition counted them as seven.[15] On the basis of Sanskrit lexicons S.K. Dikshit mentions that they are also known as many (*bahulaḥ*), and hence Skanda is known as Bāhuleya.[16]

S.K. Dikshit is conclusive in his opinion regarding the identical nature of Kṛttikās and Saptamātṛkās. He argues that since a close connection existed between the Krttikās and the Vedic Agni, the Saptamātṛkās must be also the same as the seven mothers of Agni, as well as his seven tongues or rays as mentioned in Ṛgvedic hymns.[17] Further, according to Dikshit, Kṛttikās are in the constellation of Vṛṣabha (Taurus), so the natural conclusion would be that they were regarded as *gāvaḥ* or cows, evidently identical with mother goddesses. This point is corroborated by the Sanskrit lexicons.[18]

However, no definite evidences can be quoted to prove that the Saptamātṛkās and Kṛttikās are identical. Perhaps, it is possible that the maternal aspect of Kṛttikās in relation to Skanda might have influenced the origin and formation of Saptamātṛkā icons, conceived as mothers. Yet, there is no suggestion in the names of the Saptamātṛkā-*śaktī*s to link them to astral cults. Yet, both these conceptions are linked to the Vedic heptads, which is elaborated as follows.

Sir James Frazer, gives a detailed description of the importance of Pleiades in primitive calendars throughout the world and defines how these stars were used to determine the beginning of the year and the seasons for planting or reaping.[19] For the Āryans, the erection of the sacrificial altar is directly linked with the rising of Kṛttikās (Pleiades). The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* gives the *mantra* for the order of the lying of bricks for the circular fire ring, in which, each of the twenty-eight *nakṣatra*s was represented by a brick, and the first brick to be placed was the one symbolizing Kṛttikā and it was located in the south-eastern direction.[20] To quote Mircea Eliade, "with the building of each fire altar, not only is the world remade but the year is built too, in other words, time is regenerated by being created anew".[21]

At this point we may recall the various mothers in the Vedic literature, who were counted in heptads. Agni is born in the *saptasindhu*, and Soma also has seven mothers. According to Stella Kramrisch, "what all these heptads have in common is their maternity and movement . . .".[22] It is significant that out of the seven names of Kṛttikās, the last three are no longer thought of directly as rivers of heaven, but their connection with water continues in the myths. As mentioned above, the Kṛttikās in the epic primarily symbolize charity and marital fidelity, which probably might have been a more immediate catalyst for the origin of the motherly conception of Saptamātṛkā concept. Yet, for the crystallization of the concept of the Saptamātṛkā, which possibly occurred in the late fourth or early fifth century AD, various diverse sources — the *bālagrha* tradition, the Vedic heptads, and the Kṛttikās (particularly in relation to Skanda myth) — seems to have lent conceptual supports of different nature. But, the concept of Saptamātṛkā as *śakti* personifications derive from none of these, for which we have to look into *Śākta* theology.

Śākta Cult, Tāntrism and Saptamātṛkā

The *Śākta* theology rationalizes creation, preservation and destruction of the world as the function of the divine feminine power — *Śakti*. The conception of god as woman in the Purāṇic sectarian belief is all inclusive; in the sense that She is described as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. As *Śakti, Prakṛti* and *Māyā*, She in most abstract philosophical terms is conceived as the primeval creative energy, all that is manifest and unmanifest (devoid of *guṇa*s, but assumes them to create and operate the world), the illusion and the redeemer of it. In *Devī Māhātmya*, Yoganidra is praised by Brahmā thus, "... By you this universe is born. By you it is protected and you always consume at the end.... You are the supreme knowledge as well as the great nescience, the great intellect and contemplation and also the great delusion.... You are the goodness of good fortune, the ruler, modesty, intelligence characterized by knowledge, bashfulness, nourishment, contentment, tranquillity and forbearance.... whatever or wherever a thing exists, conscient or non-conscient, whatever power (*śakti*) all that possesses is yourself."[23] The conception of *śakti* identified as the female originates from *Devīsūkta* and *Rātrisūkta* of *Ṛgveda.* In the former, goddess Vāk, describes herself as presiding over speech and she ascribes to herself the only motivating power of every effort in the world.[24] In the latter too the concept of the energy as inherent in everything, in gods, men and animals is identified as originating from the conception of divine feminine. In *Atharvaveda* the goddess is described as mother of Indra and as the one dwelling in gods, things and animals.[25]

The syncretic and accultured Purāṇic *Śākta* religion of the Kuṣāṇa-Gupta period, derived its philosophical substance from three related conflations. The primacy of *prakṛti* derived from *Sāṁkhya* cosmological rationalisation, monistic *Brahman* identified with the female adopted from *Advaita* philosophy, and the Tāntric ritualism which held up the idea that Śiva without Śakti is a corpse.

The operational sphere of *Śākta* myths, though distinct from the philosophical interpretations, are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the *Śākta* mythopoeia, as in other sectarian systems bases itself upon theological and philosophical hypothesis, which along with the worship/ritual modes constitute the totality of the belief-system/ideology. The most significant theological tool that explains the multifarious aspects or the so-called manifestations (including Saptamātṛkā) of the goddess is the rationalisation through *vibhūti-vāda*, which possibly is derived from *Vaiṣṇava* theology. In *Devī-Māhātmya* the Devī herself is made to say "I am all alone in the world here .... these goddesses are but my own powers. The numerous forms which I projected by my power (*vibhūti*) have been withdrawn by me, and I stand alone."[26] From *Devī-Māhātmya* onwards the disparate conceptions of goddesses could be interpreted as belonging to and deriving from the goddess, most often generically referred to as Devī. The syncretic approach of the *Śākta* theology thus places and defines Saptamātṛkā concept centrally as manifestations from the omnipotent divine female, even though their origin (in *Devī-Māhātmya* itself) is traced from the various male gods.

This theological tying-up of disparate manifestations of goddesses through *vibhūti-vāda* positively enabled the subsequent enlargement of the pantheon on polytheistic grounds. Combined with Tāntric disposition towards devising aspectual goddesses, the *Śākta* cult in the medieval period and later has given rise to multifarious goddess(es) personalities, counted singularly or in collectives. Examples of the collectives, such as Mātṛkās in varied numbers, *Nava*-Durgās, *Dasa*-Mahāvidyās, *Causaṭ*-Yoginīs, etc., and individual aspectual goddesses such as different forms of Kālī, Tārā, Chinnamastā, etc. exemplify the tendency in *Śākta* Tāntrism to freely and imaginatively devise ever new conceptions of the divine feminine on the basis of *vibhūti-vāda* or at times based on the principle of *avatāra-vāda*. The Saptamātṛkā conception defined within such a schema of theology finds full expression rooted in medieval Śāktism, where the ancient Vedic heptads and the multifarious Kuṣāṇa goddesses can hardly be perceived to have lent any influence in its origin and development.

Devī-Māhātmya, the earliest *Śākta* text, itself provides ample evidences of Saptamātṛkā conception having originated within the ideals of *Sāṁkhya*,[27] Devī is described as the primordial cause of everything, bringing into force the three qualities, (i.e., *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*), and the Tāntric and *Advaita* philosophies, which find considerable support from the evidences in literary and inscriptional sources, proving particularly the Tāntric ritual mode of propitiation of the terrible forms of goddess. The goddesses such as Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā, prefigures *ghora* and *tāmasic* conceptions of Tāntric deities.[28] Apart from Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā, who are emanations, the Devī as such is also mentioned as fond of drinking wine, one of the *pañca makāra* essential for the Tāntric ritual practice.[29]

The foremost *Sāṁkhya* tenet of idealizing the female principle as supreme and above that of male, is exemplified in *Devī-Māhātmya*, where the Devī is said to be the source of origin and as one who is worshipped by Viṣṇu and Śiva.[30] Since Tāntric philosophy emphasizes the equality of male and female principles, the opposing and complimentary aspects of these are best exemplified in the Saptamātṛkā concept. Though overtly female energies, they are contained within the particularized male persona of individual male godheads. The transfiguration from the male to the female is near total, but not complete, leaving us to perceive the almost imperceptible idea of union, the inseparable coexistence of the primordial undivided oneness. Here, the Tāntric yearning for the bliss in the union of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* has found most appropriate theological, mythical and iconographical parallelism.

Mātṛkās are referred to in *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* as *Mātṛgaṇa*,[31] *Mātaraḥ*,[32] *Mātṛbhiḥ* and *Mātṛṇāṁ*.[33] They are mentioned as the personified female energies of principal gods and are described as universal mothers (*viśvasya mātaraḥ*).[34] While describing the consecration of the images of various gods, Varāhamihira lays down that the *Mātṛ* images should be installed by persons well-versed in the special mode pertaining to their worship, namely the *maṇḍalakarma*.[35] Utpala, his commentator mentions it as *pūjākarma*. J.N. Banerjea on the basis of Kanha's *Dohākośa* mentions that both must have meant the Tāntric Cakra (Bhairavī?) and the ritualistic order of it.[36] About their representation, the author states, that they are to be made with signs which follow the gods after whom they are named.[37] Varāhamihira is silent about their number, but his commentator, Utpala mentions their number as eleven, and the names as Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Raudrī, Kaumārī, Aindrī, Yamī, Vāruṇī, Kauberī, Narasiṁhī, Vārāhī and Vināyakī. According to Ajay Mitra Shastri, this refers to the condition prevalent in the ninth century AD, when the commentator flourished and not during the first quarter of the fifth century (or 1st half of sixth century AD) which is the generally approved date of *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*.

The earliest inscriptional evidence regarding the Mātṛkā worship in association with Tāntric rituals is the well-known Gangadhar (western Malwa) stone inscription of the year AD 423-24[38] that seems to have been a part of a temple wall. The inscription opens with an invocation to Viṣṇu and records that Mayurākṣaka, a minister of king Viśvavarman, who had built a temple dedicated to Viṣṇu and a large drinking well. The portion of the inscription relevant to the present context reads : "Also, for the sake of religious merit, the councillor of the king caused to be built this very terrible abode, . . . (and) filled full of female ghouls (*ḍākinī*s), of the divine mothers, who utter loud and tremendous shouts in joy (and) who stir up the (very) oceans with mighty wind rising from the magic (Tāntric) rites of their religion". [39] The significance of the inscription lies in the fact that it establishes a clear link between Mātṛkās and the Tāntric rites. The *ghora* nature of the goddesses is very clear and a distinction between *ḍākinī*s and the Mātṛkās is also noticeable.

Another inscription from Patna (Bihar), dating to the reign of the monarch Skandagupta (*ca*. AD 455-467) refers to the worship of Skanda and the mothers.[40] The inscription written on a *yūpa* seems to record the erection of a sacrificial post in, or in front of, a shrine which was in some way connected with the *Mātṛ*s.[41] The legible relevant portions in line seven and eight of the inscription are translated by Fleet as ". . . by (the presence of) Bhadrārya, the house shrines . . . the sky laden with fresh clouds . . . headed by (the god) Skanda, and by the divine mothers, on the earth".[42] The indentification of Bhadrārya is uncertain. V.S. Agrawala suggests that she may be the same as Bhadrā, who is regarded as the wife of Kubera, and, emphasizing *ārya*, D.C. Sircar identifies her with Pārvatī,[43] M.C. Joshi maintains that this epigraph, in addition to the Skanda and Mātṛs refers to the house for Bhadrārya which may be a name of the goddess Bhadrakālī or Bhadrā, often considered to be identical with Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Further, the scholar suggests that, the term *devaniketa-maṇḍalānī* may be referring to some kind of grouping of shrines of Skanda and the Mātṛkās which were arranged in a circular manner with a central temple of Bhadrakālī faced by a *yūpa*, the sacrificial pillar specifically meant for tying the animal to be sacrificed.[44] If this inference is true, the ambience of Tāntrism in the worship of Mātṛkās is obvious.

Incidental, but significant evidences of the nature of the ritual offered to the Mātṛkās is noticed in the classical Sanskrit literature. Bhāsa in his play *Daridra Cārudatta* and Śūdraka in his *Mṛcchakaṭika*, refer to the worship Mātṛkās. Both the authors refer to the *bali* to be offered at the crossroads for the propitiation of Mātṛkās.[45] Cārudatta, the hero in the play *Daridra Cārudatta*, instructs Vidūṣaka, "go, offer (this) *bali* to the *Mātṛ*s at the crossroads".[46] In almost the same words, the instruction is repeated in the *Mṛcchakaṭika*.[47] In the latter, upon Vidūṣaka's reluctance to oblige, the hero tells him that such rites should not be questioned, as they are obligatory duties of a householder, which clearly points out that such a ritual was commonplace, during the time this play was written.[48] Two more points are suggested through this reference: one that the offering was supposed to take place at the onset of night, presumably in the dark half of the month, and secondly the night in question was probably the sixth day of the dark half of the month.[49] However, it may be noted that Mātṛkās are referred only generically as *Mātṛ* and not in any specific number or name, which leaves the question whether these references are really about Saptamātṛkā.

In the *Harṣacarita* of Bānabhaṭṭa, when king Puṣpabhūti wished to see Bhairavācārya, he is told that the ascetic was staying in a *bilvavāṭikā* to the north of an old *Mātrgṛha.*[50] On another occasion, the young nobles are described as propitiating *Mātṛmaṇḍalaṁ,* when Harṣa returns on hearing his father's illness. The propitiation of *Mātṛ*s was one among other rites performed for the restoration of the king's health.[51] In *Harṣacarita* a man in servitude, is described as one "who is thrown in various directions like the *mātṛbalipiṇḍa* even at night".[52] The ritual mentioned here is probably analogous to the ones in *Cārudatta* or *Mṛcchakaṭika*.

Apart from the esoteric Tāntric bearing in connection with the worship of the Mātṛkās, they appear to have been propitiated for various other purposes as well. In *Kādambarī*, the queen Vilāsavatī is said to be resorting to the neighbouring shrines of the Mātṛkās for obtaining a son.[53] Later Vilāsavatī is again depicted as propitiating the Avantī-Mātṛs for the safe return of her son Candrapīḍa.[54] The Avantī-Mātṛs are identified as Saptamātṛkās in Bhanuchandra's commentary.[55]

In the *Nātya Śāstra,* Bharatamuni recommends the worship of the *Mātṛ*s in the rituals connected with the preparation and consecration of the playhouse and the stage. The text clearly identifies these goddess as Brāhmī (i.e., Brahmāṇī) etc., but labels them as *Nātya-Mātara*.[56] The offerings and salutations to them are preceded by that to Kubera and other Yakṣas, followed by offerings to the weapons of Rudra and Viṣṇu. *Amarakośa* refers to the Mātṛkās as Brāhmī and others.[57]

The above references clearly establish the popular base of the worship of Mātṛkās. The significant point is that Mātṛkās are worshipped in different contexts and for different purposes, and the above descriptions testify these.

Kings, Skanda and Saptamātṛkā

The Gangadhar and Patna inscription mentioned previously in the context of the Tāntric ritual, having a bearing on the worship of Mātṛkās, further illustrate two other significant connections. Firstly that the respective kings of the inscriptions resorted to these divinities for certain specific purpose, and secondly that Saptamātṛkās and Skanda were linked together on certain particular terms. Both these establish that these two deities were considered as patrons of war.

Replacing Indra, Skanda in the time of neo-Brāhmanical recoupment is accultured to assume the role of commander-in-chief of the gods, positively during Gupta period and later too, side by side with Viṣṇu who assumed the full-fledged role, analogous to kṣatriya authority over these matters. It is only natural that the earthly kings worshipped Skanda. The Saptamātṛkā also are referred along with him for they being aggressive warrior goddesses, aided victory. Possibly there existed a connection between war and Tāntric rituals too, since the latter can be inferred to have been resorted for various material attainments (*bhukti*), particularly for the empowerment in war.

An inscription ascribed a date between *ca.* AD 455-70 from Talagunda (Shimoga Dist. Mysore) mentions a brāhmaṇa king, Mayurasarman, the first monarch of the Kadambas. Line twenty-two of the lengthy inscription tells that he was favoured by Ṣaḍānana (Skanda) and Mothers. It also mentions that the king was also anointed as a general (*senāpati*) by these deities.[58] Neither the number nor the names of the Mātṛkās are mentioned in the inscription. However, we can infer that Skanda and the Mothers are considered as patron deities by the kings in South India, in the early period. It may be noted that the date of Mayurasarman's reign is much disputed. While some believe that he ruled from AD 250-300,[59] others suggest AD 320-50 as the probable time of his rule.[60]

Saptamātṛkās and Skanda are often referred to in the inscriptions of both Eastern and Western Cālukyan kings.[61] These kings trace their decent from Hāritī and are said to have been preserved by the seven Mothers. These records range from Jayasiṁha I (632-63 AD) to Badapa (c. AD 970). Almost all records contain the usual phrase, (with slight variations), *Hāritīputrāṇām, Mātṛgaṇaparirakṣitānām, Mātṛgaṇābhiṣiktānām, Mātṛbhirabhjrakṣitānām, Mātṛgaṇaparipālitānām*, and *Saptaloka Mātṛbhiḥ-Saptamātṛbhibhaivardhitānām.* Of the kings mentioned in these inscription, belonging to the period of Vikramāditya I (AD 660), Buddhavarṣa (AD 700), Vijayāditya I (AD 707) and Vijayāditya II (AD 731). We find the references to Saptamātṛkās as *gaṇa.* The accepted number seven is mentioned at times, but when not mentioned, possibly indicate that it was taken for granted that the accepted view about the numerical strength of Mātrkās was seven, irrespective of whether the number was indicated or not.[62]

Immediately above the niche containing the images of Saptamātṛkās, flanked by Vīṇādhara

Śiva and Gaṇapati at the Naharghati in Deogarh (Jhansi Dist., U.P.) is a slightly damaged inscription datable paleographically to sixth century AD.[63] It begins with an invocation to the divine Mothers thus: "May the group of the Mothers, the Mothers of the universe, having their dwelling in . . . and having powers fit for the preservation of the world be for your welfare."[64] The person Svāmībhaṭa, who caused the construction of the "indestructible abode" for the Mothers probably belonged to a princely family.[65]

Saptamātṛkā in Myths

The myth describing the origin and function of Mātṛkās in the different *Purāṇa*s has more or less a standard content. The basic structure too remains almost unchanged, though the details and names of the characters vary. Mātṛkās in these myths are the *śakti* potentialities of the principal Brāhmanical gods, and function as auxiliaries to Devī or to her consort Śiva in destroying a particular *asura* and his army.

The *Devī-Māhātmya* is narrated by brāhmaṇa Ṛṣi Medhas to kṣatriya Suratha and vaiśya Samādhi, in order that they may attain release from the great illusion (*mahāmāyā*) caused by the goddess. It is the earliest extant text to fully define the concept of *śakti*.[66] The goddess in this text is all powerful and the ultimate power of the universe, in whom the sectarian preoccupations find its full expression. The epithets such as *Mahāmāyā* (the great illusion), *Kālarātri* (dark night of periodic dissolution), *Mahārātri* and *Moharātri* (night of delusion) in the first chapter itself, establish the stupendous powers of Devī, terrible and invincible.[67]

The omnipotent Devī emanates different forms for annihilating the *asura*s and the text contains series of narratives, at the end of each confrontation she emerges victorious. In the initial chapter, Mahāmāyā withdraws from the eyes of the sleeping Viṣṇu and prompts him to destroy Madhu and Kaiṭabha, hence Devī is established as the moving force. In the IInd and IVth chapters goddess Caṇḍikā (also called Śivā, Devi, Īśvarī and Aṁbikā) is created out of the collective energies (*śakti*) who eventually annihilate Mahiṣāsura.

The episode concerning Saptamātṛkā divinities is the killing of the two demons Śuṁbha and Niśuṁbha and their armies. Chapters V to X contain the elaborate description of the various confrontations and victories of the Devī over the different demons and their retinue. When the gods thought of Aparājitā, the invincible goddess, Pārvatī divided herself into the beautiful goddess Kauśikī (Aṁbikā) and the dark Kālikā. Enchanted by the beauty of Aṁbikā, Śuṁbha sends the demon Dhūmralocana and the contingent whom Aṁbikā kills instantly (Chapter VI). Following this Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa arrive to capture Aṁbikā and she emits Kālī from her forehead. It is said that because she destroyed Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, she is known as Cāmuṇḍā (Chapter VII). Finally, Śuṁbha and Niśuṁbha came forward to fight with Kauśikī and Kāli-Cāmuṇḍā. When Śuṁbha was enraged at the loss the demons had suffered, instantly there issued forth, endowed with tremendous vigour and strength, the energies (*śaktayaḥ*) form the bodies of Brahmā, Śiva, Guha (i.e., Skanda), Viṣṇu and Indra. At this point the iconographic description of the *śakti* of the gods are given, which is in parity with the form of each male god, their ornaments and vehicles. The goddess then joined the battle along with Devī. There is no special mention of Cāmuṇḍā, since, as Kālī, she is already present in the Devī's rank. However, at that time also, the Devī herself transfigured once again, and from her body, the fiercest aspect called Śivadūtī (also called a *śakti*) came forth. In the description of the battle that followed, the individual action of each of the *śakti* manifestations, including Kālī and Śivadūtī are narrated, and collectively they are called *Mātṛ-gaṇa* or *Mātṛ*. During the battle one *asura* general, Raktabīja proved to be a formidable foe, because, from every drop of his blood falling on the earth, a new *asura* was born. He is mentioned to have been destroyed by Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā and the Devī (Chapter VIII). Then Niśumbha is defeated by Kauśikī and her forces (Chapter IX), leaving only the *asura* king Śumbha. He challenges Kauśikī to fight the battle alone. Then Devī saying that she is alone in the world and the other goddesses are but manifestations of her own power, absorbed within her body all the *śakti* embodiments including Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā and Śivadūti. Chapter X describes the long battle waged between Kauśikī and Śumbha and the final victory of the Devī. Chapter XI are praises to the goddess in all her numerous forms. Chapter XII gives directions for the worship of the Devī and the enlightened king and the merchant worship the Devī, by fasting and offering blood from their own bodies.

In the *Vāmana Purāṇa*, a similar account of *Mātṛ*s is narrated. However, in this the mothers emanate from the body of Caṇḍikā herself and not from the respective male gods. The legend of the slaying of the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha, etc., is derived from the *Devī-Māhātmya*.[68] In *Varāha Purāṇa*, unlike the above, *Mātṛ*s appear to aid Śiva against Andhakāsura.[69] The story of Raktabīja from the *Devī-Māhātmya* is replaced by that of Andhakāsura from whose each drop of blood an identical demon emerges. To stop the falling of the blood on earth, Śiva created Yogeśvarī out of the flame issuing from his mouth. The gods also sent their Śaktis; Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī and Cāmuṇḍā, armed with weapons, wearing ornaments and riding *vāhana*s and carrying banners like their respective male counterparts. By adding Yogeśvarī to this group, the eight Mātṛkās are derived.

In the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (*ca.* AD 400-500)[70] Narasiṁha is said to have created 32 Mātṛkās,[71] though the names of only 24 are known due to the missing part of the verse.[72] In this text also, the Mātṛkās are created in the context of Śiva's killing of Andhakāsura. It is mentioned that the *Mātṛ*s were born from the bodies of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Narasiṁha when Śiva eulogized the later for help in the battle. Mātṛkās came forward including Kālī and Mahākalī to join in the war against the demon. Gopinatha Rao's list of Saptamātṛkās describing their *vāhana*s and *āyudha*s derive from the *Viṣṇudharmottara* which is as quoted in Vachaspatya.[73] Hazra does not mention this list as part of the original text but holds the view that that Vachaspatya list is closer to that of the later *Agni Purāṇa* list (AD 800-900).[74]

Two chapters of *Matsya Purāṇa* (179 and 261) provide information on Mātṛkās. Hazra opines that the former is a much later addition (*ca.* AD 800-950).[75] As in the *Viṣṇudharmottara,* Śiva is credited with having created 190 and many more demons to aid him in the battle against

Andhakāsura. Chapter 261 of the text (*ca.* AD 550-650) describes the iconographical details of Mātṛkās.[76] Īśāna (Śiva) is listed in the beginning. He has three eyes, holds a trident and rides on Nandī. Brahmāṇī's vehicle is *haṁsa* and holds *kamaṇḍalu* and *akṣamālā*; Maheśvarī's seat is a bull, has matted hair adorned with crescent moon, carries a sword, skull, trident and *khatvāṅga.* Vaiṣṇavī rides on garuḍa and holds *cakra, śaṅkha, gadā* and carries a child. Vārāhī rides on a buffalo and holds *gadā* and *cakra*. Indrāṇī's *vāhana* is an elephant, she has many eyes, hold a *khadga, vajra* and *gadā.* The seventh goddess is Yogeśvarī. She is described as having long tongue, hair which stands on end. She is decorated with bones, and has ferocious teeth, slender waist and three eyes. She wears *muṇḍa-mālā*, and holds a severed head in the left hand and a spear in the right. Her *vāhana* is either a crow or a vulture. It is also mentioned that when she assumes the form of Śrī Cāmuṇḍā she wears tiger skin and grasps a bell in the hand. When she assumes the form of Kālikā, she is to be represented as riding on an ass, holding a skull. Though recommended to be made nude she too is adorned with red flowers and banners.[77]

The *Devī-Purāṇa* (*ca.* AD 550 to 650)[78] exclusively devotes all the chapters to the Saptamātṛkā. Apart from the description of the imagery of Saptamātṛkās the text also includes Tāntric rites connected to their worship.

Saptamātṛkā Iconography : Śilpa Texts

There is ample evidence to study the prevalence of Mātṛkā-worship, during the post-Gupta period and throughout the medieval period, as evidenced in the literary sources, some of which has been discussed earlier. Though of little purpose in studying iconography, the references in the Sanskrit literary sources throw a great deal of light upon the ritualistic and other general characteristics of the cult. The apprehension of Michael Meister[79] regarding the value of written evidences in studying in exact details the spread of the cult of Saptamātṛkās or their regional iconography, is truly a major limitation; yet, it is to be conceded that the texts can be utilized as indicators in analyzing certain general directions and patterns in the tradition, while maintaining the visual evidences as the prime indicators in creating meanings and knowledge. An attempt in this direction is the concern in the following chapters, but for the present the overview of the textual sources is being continued.

As noted earlier, the *Bṛhat Saṁhitā* does not elaborate upon the order, number or the attributes of the Mātṛkās. It simply states that they are to be made with the signs which follow the male gods after whom they are named. The earliest text to elaborate upon the iconography of Mātṛkās is *Devī-Māhātmya*. Although delineated in the narrative context a description of the Mātṛkās are found here. According to this, whatever was the form of each *deva* and whatever was his ornaments and vehicle, in that very form his *śakti* is said to have advanced to fight with the *asuras*.[80] The *śakti* of Brahmā is described as having advanced in a heavenly chariot drawn by swans, carrying a rosary and a *kamaṇḍalu*.[81] Maheśvarī arrives on a bull, holding a trident, wearing bracelets of snakes and adorned with the crescent moon.[82] Kaumārī rides a peacock and holds a spear.[83] The *śakti* of Viṣṇu is described as seated on Garuḍa, holding *śaṅkha, gadā*, bow and sword.[84] The *śakti* of Hari, who assumed the incomparable form of a sacrificial boar, appeared in a boar-like form.[85] Narasiṁhī assumed the body like that of Narasiṁha, bringing down the constellation by the toss of her mane.[86] Aindrī is described as thousand-eyed, holding the thunderbolt and riding on the lord of elephants.[87] It is interesting that among the seven Mātṛkās, Cāmuṇḍā is excluded, but apart from the other six goddesses, Narasiṁhī is included to complete the list.

Aparājitapṛcchā of Bhuvanadeva mentions dancing Vīreśa, holding a *vīṇā* among the Mātṛkās. According to this text Gananātha is to be shown as fierce with an elephant face, who is to be made in the beginning, while Bhairava at the other end. The Mātṛkās, Caṇḍikā, etc., are to be shown in a row in the middle.[88] Caṇḍikā is described as emaciated, fierce, and has bright shining teeth.[89] Vārāhī is described as boar-faced and riding on a buffalo. She holds *akṣamālā, khadga, ghaṇṭa* and *kamaṇḍalu*.[90] Aindrī is seated on the elephant, holding *akṣamālā, pāśa* and *kamaṇḍalu*. In the same stanza Cāmuṇḍā is said to be riding on *preta*.[91] The six-faced Kaumārī is to be seated on a peacock and holds the *akṣamālā, śakti, kukkuḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu*.[92] Brāhmī is four-faced, holds an *akṣamālā, pustaka* and *kamaṇḍalu*, while seated on a *haṁsa*.[93] Bearing the *gadā, cakra, śaṅkha* and *padma* and adorned by ear ornaments Vaiṣṇavī rides on the Garuḍa.[94] Maheśvarī sits on a bull and holds *akṣamālā, śūla*, *khadga, khatvāṅga* and *mātuliṅga* (citron fruit). She is fair (literally white) complexioned and her hair is adorned with the crescent moon.[95]

According to *Rūpamaṇḍana* Brahmāṇī is to be shown riding a swan, holding *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu*, she also holds the *sruva* and *pustaka* in her two upper hands.[96] Maheśvarī is to be seated on a bull. The four-armed goddess bears skull, *śūla, khatvāṅga* and *varada hasta.*[97] Kaumārī has a form like Kumāra, and she rides on a peacock. She wears red garments and holds *śūla, śakti*, and *gadā*.[98] Vaiṣṇavī, identical to Viṣṇu, is to be seated on Garuḍa. In her four hands she bears *varada, śaṅkha, cakra* and *gadā*.[99] Vārāhī is like Varāha. She is to be seated on a buffalo, strikes the bell and holds flywhisk. She bears the *gadā,* and *cakra*. She is mentioned as destroying all diseases for the benefit of people.[100] Aindrī is similar to Indra, holds a *vajra, śūla* and *gadā*. The goddess is to be seated on the elephant, while her body is to be made covered with many eyes.[101] Cāmuṇḍā is described as having fangs, frail body, deep eyes, a fierce form and narrow belly. In her eight hands she wields a club, *cakra* and arrow. Her right hands bear *aṅkuśa* and *khadga*, while the left hands hold shield, *pāśa* bow and axe. She may alternatively be shown with two arms only.[102] Cāmuṇḍā rides on *preta* and is to be red-complexioned. She has a fierce (literally, distorted) face and wears serpents as ornaments.

References

1. Different versions of the myth and their analysis can be found in Wendy O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva*, chapter III, New Delhi, 1973.
2. R.C. Hazra, *Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, Dacca, 1940, pp. 15-16.

3. D.R. Patil, *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, Poona, 1946, p. 63.
4. *Mahābhārata, Āraṇyaka Parvan,* 217.9, 10. The list is enumerated by N.P. Joshi, *Mātṛkās: Mothers in Kuṣāṇa Art*, New Delhi, 1986.
5. *Ibid.*, 229.50. N.P. Joshi, *ibid.*, p. 25.
6. *Mahābhārata*, 230.26-35.
7. *Ibid.*, 230.10, 11.
8. *Ibid.*, 231.48, 49.
9. *Skanda Purāṇa, Kumārika Khaṇḍa,* 29.175.
10. Wendy O'Flaherty, *op.cit.,* 1973.
11. *Ibid.* In the *Skanda Purāṇa* (5.I, 34.60.6) the seed of Śiva thrown into the Ganges by Agni is placed on the banks by the river. The wives of the seven sages, who come there to bathe, pained by cold, thought that the blazing seed was fire and warmed themselves and the seed entered them through the buttocks. Troubled by the seed, and in the fear of their husbands they hide on the banks of the Ganges, until Svāhā, the wife of Agni entered their bodies and took the seed. Then she took the form of the wives of seven sages and made love with Agni. The seven sages abandoned their wives, who went to Skanda and claimed him as their son. Skanda sent them to heaven and they became Kṛttikās.
12. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 2.1.2., 4-5, Cf. 4.4. 2.9 and 6.1.3.7-8, as referred to by Wendy O'Flaherty, *op.cit.*
13. (a) E.W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology,* Strassburg, 1955, pp.105-6.
    (b) Manmatha Mukhopadhyay, " Some Notes on Skanda-Kārtikeya", in *IHQ*, VII, 1931, p. 317.
    (c) Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary,* p. 304. S.V. Kṛttikā.
    (d) J.N. Tiwari, *Goddess Cult in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1985, p. 150.
14. Monier Monier-Williams, *op.cit.*
15. (a) *Taittirīya Saṁhitā,* IV. 4.5.
    (b) *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa,* III.1.4.1.
    (c) J.N. Tiwari, *op.cit.,* p. 150, mentions the names of Kṛttikās as Aṁbā, Dulā, Nitatnī, Cupuikā, Abhrayantī, Meghayantī and Varṣayantī.
16. *Amarakośa* St. 44.45; as referred by S.K.Dikshit, *The Mother-Goddess*, Poona, p. 112.
17. S.K. Dikshit, *Ibid.*, p. 112, Dikshit does not deal specifically with the question of the origin of the Mātṛkās; he expresses his opinion on the subject in the course of a discussion on the role of the stars and planets,in the development of the Mother Goddess cults in Western Asia and India.
18. *Amarakośa* St. 1407, *bāhulāḥ kṛttikā gāvo bahulognuḥ śito triṣu*. Cf. *Śāśvata Kośa*. St. 16, as referred by S.K. Dikshit, *op.cit.,* p. 112.
19. Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* New York, 1953. Vol. I, pp. 307-19; and *Aftermath — A Supplement to the Golden Bough*. New York, 1935, pp. 393-97.
20. A.B. Keith (tr.), *The Veda of the Black Yajus School,* Cambridge, 1914, p. 349.
21. W.C. Beane and W.G. Doty (eds.), *Myths, Rites and Symbols, A Mircea Eliade Reader*, New York, 1975.
22. Stella Kramrisch, "The Indian Great Goddess", in *History of Religions*, Vol. 14, No. 4, May 1975, p. 262.
23. *Devī-Māhātmya*, 1.75-77, 1.78-81, 1.82-87.

24. *Ṛgveda*, X.125. 1-8.
25. *Atharvaveda*, VII.38.1-4.
26. *Devī-Māhātmya*, 10.4-5, 7-8.
27. *Ibid.*, I.78.
28. *Ibid.*, I.81, mentions much like Tāntric vision of a deity, that the goddess is terrible, and at the same time pleasing.
29. *Ibid.*, III.34 and 37.
30. *Ibid.*, I.82-87 and IV.4-7.
31. *Bṛhat Saṁhitā*, LVII.56.
32. *Ibid.*, XLVII.68.
33. *Ibid.*, XLVII, and 68, these are plural forms of the word *Mātṛ*.
34. *Ibid.*, XLVII.68.
35. *Ibid.*, ILIX.19, *mātṛṇāmapi maṇḍalakarmavidhā*. Ajay Mitra Sastri, *India as seen in Bṛhatsṁhitā of Varāhamihira,* Delhi, 1969, p. 14, mentions that a special mode of propitiating the mothers is referred to in the term *maṇḍalakarma*.
36. J.N. Banerjea, "Some early literary and Archaeological Data About Tāntrism", in *Essays in Indian Art, Religion and Society,* Indian History Congress Golden Jubilee Year Publication, ed. by Krisna Mohan Shrimali, Delhi, p. 50.
37. *Bṛhat Saṁhitā*, LVII.56 — *mātṛgaṇa kartavya svanāmadeva anurūpakṛta chinaḥ.*
38. Fleet John Faithfull, *Corpus Inscriptiptionum Indicarum,* III, Varanasi, 1963, p. 76.
39. *Matṛṇāñca (paramu) dita ghanatyartha-nihrādiṇinām tantrodbhūta-prabala-pavanodvartitāmbonidhninām /... gatamidaṁdākinī-samprakirṇām. veśmātyugraṁ nṛpatisaciva(s)kāryate puṇyahetoḥ.*
40. Fleet, *JFCII,* III, No. 12, p. 47. Also D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions Bearing on Indian History and Civilization,* I, Calcutta, 1942, No. 30, p. 325 ff.
41. J.N. Tiwari, *op.cit.,* p. 102.
42. *skandapradhānairbhuvi-mātṛbhiśca.*
43. V.S. Agrawala. *JNSI,* III, p. 82, and D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.,* p. 328, Sircar also notes that Bhadra is a name of Śiva.
44. M.C. Joshi, "Śākta Tāntrism in the Gupta Age", in *Aruṇa Bhāratī,* A.N. Jani Felicitation Volume, ed. by Dr. B. Datta, Dr. U.C. Sharma, Dr. N.J. Vyas, Baroda, 1983, p. 8.
45. D.D. Kosambi, "At the Crossroads", in *JASGBI,* 1960, p. 18.
46. *maitreya ! gaccha, catuṣpathe balimupahāra mātṛbhyaḥ,* in *Bhāsa Nāṭaka-Cakram,* ed. by C. Devadhar, xxx, p. 204.
47. *tadvaysa ... gaccha, tvamapi catuṣpathe mātṛbhya balimpahra, Mṛcchakaṭikam,* N.S.P. edition, Act I, p. 16.
48. J. N. Tiwari, *op.cit.,* p. 87.
49. *Ibid.,* p. 98.
50. *Harṣacarita,* ed. by P.V. Kane, Delhi, 1965, 3rd *ucchvāsa*, p. 46. *asya jīrṇa-mātṛgṛhasyottareṇa bilvavāṭikā madhyaste.*
51. *Ibid.*, 5th *ucchvāsa*, p. 21, *kvaciddīpikā-dahyamana-kulaputraka-prasādyamāna-mātṛmaṇḍalam.* There are differences of opinion about the nature of this special propitiation. E.B. Cowell and F.W. Thomes (translation of *Harṣacarita*, London, 1897, p. 135), translate the verse as "there young nobles were burning themselves with lamps

to propitiate Mothers". According to Kane, they did not burn their limbs, they rather kept lamps on their heads to propitiate the Mothers, and now and then got burnt accidentally. *Harṣacarita*, ed. by P.V. Kane, Bombay, 1917, notes, p. 71. V.S. Agrawala merely puts it as propitiating the *Mātṛ*s by burning lamps. ***See** Harṣacarita — Ek Sāṁskṛtika Adhyayana* (Hindi), Patna, 1953.

52. *Ibid*., 7th *ucchvāsa*, p. 65, *niśāsvāpi mātṛ-bali-piṇḍasyeva dikṣu vikṣipgamānasya.*
53. *Kādambarī,* ed. by K.P. Parab, p. 145, *arṣita-pratyayāni sannihita-mātṛkā-bhavanāni jagama.*
54. *Ibid*., p. 649.
55. V.S. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1953, p. 305 and fn. 1.
56. *Nāṭya Śāstra,* III.66, *namasutu nāṭyamātṛbhya brāhmyādibhyo namo namaḥ.* The same *Mātṛ*s seems to be referred to in Chapter III.29 and 44. In both the cases they are named along with the Yakṣas. In Chapter II, 8, Nāṭya Kumārīs are mentioned, they also may be same as *Mātṛ*s.
57. *Nāmaliṅgaśāsana* or *Amarakośa,* ed. by Pandit Haragovinda Sastri, Varanasi, 1970, I. 1.35.
58. D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.*, 1942, pp. 450-55.
59. R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Classical Age,* Bombay, 1970, p.271.
60. D.C. Sircar, *The Successors of the Sātvāhanas,* Calcutta, 1939, p. 233.
61. *EI,* Vol. XIX, pp. 141, 152, 256; and 258, Vol. XXVII, p. 27; Vol. IX, p. 319; Vol. XXXII, pp. 182 and 320, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 121; Vol. XIV, p. 149; Vol. XXV, p. 22.
62. C.R. Srinivasan, "Sapta Mātṛkās", in *JOI,* M.S. University of Baroda, Vol. XXIV, March-June 1975, Nos. 3-4.
63. Durga Ram Sahni, "Deogarh Rock Inscriptions of Svāmibhata", in *EI*, XVIII, No. 15, pp. 125-27.
64. *sthānāṁ jagadrakṣāksamavjasāṁ mātṛṇāṁ lokamātṛṇāṁ maṇḍalaṁ bhūtayestu vaḥ.*
65. J.N. Tiwari, *op.cit.*, p. 120.
66. R.C. Hazra, *op.cit.*, 1940, p. 10 and 12.
67. V.S. Agrawala, *The Devī-Māhātmya*, Banaras, 1963.
68. V.S. Agrawala, *Vāmana Purāṇa — A Study,* Varanasi, 1964.
69. The myth is summarised by T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* I. Pt. II, Varanasi, 1971, p. 381.
70. H.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1958, p. 212.
71. R.C. Hazra, *op.cit.,* 1940, p. 12.
72. R.C. Hazra, *op.cit.,* 1958, p. 156.
73. T. A.G. Rao., *op.cit.,* pp. 379-89.
74. R.C. Hazra, *op.cit.,* 1940, p. 138.
75. *Ibid*., p. 50.
76. *Ibid*., p. 47.
77. *Matsya Purāṇa,* Chapter 261.
78. R.C. Hazra, *op.cit.,* 1958, vol. II, p. 77. Hazra originally gave the date of this text as 650-700, but later published the date as AD 550-660. ***See***, "The Devī Purāṇa", in *The Indian Antiquary,* Vol. V, 1942-43, p. 12.
79. Michael W. Meister, "Regional Variations in Mātṛkā Conventions", in *ABA*, Vol. XLVII, p. 233.

80. *Devī-Māhātmya*, 8.14.
81. *Ibid.*, 8.15.
82. *Ibid.*, 8.16.
83. *Ibid.*, 8.17.
84. *Ibid.*, 8.18.
85. *Ibid.*, 8.19.
86. *Ibid.*, 8.20.
87. *Ibid.*, 8.21.
88. *Aparājitapṛcchā,* General Editor, B.Bhattacharya, Baroda, 1950, 223, 12, 13, 14.
89. *Ibid.*, 223, 15.
90. *Ibid.*, 223, 16.
91. *Ibid.*, 223, 17.
92. *Ibid.*, 223, 18.
93. *Ibid.*, 223, 19.
94. *Ibid.*, 223, 20.
95. *Ibid.*, 223, 21.
96. *Rūpamaṇḍana*, 5.63.
97. *Ibid.*, 5.64.
98. *Ibid.*, 5.65.
99. *Ibid.*, 5.66.
100. *Ibid.*, 5.67, 68.
101. *Ibid.*, 5.69.
102. *Ibid.*, 5.70-72.

4

Saptamātṛkā Icons-I

(fourth to mid-sixth centuries AD)

A Critique of Previous Researches and Methodological Considerations

THE emergence and the early phase of Saptamātṛkā iconography exemplifying two distinct typologies, in central India, Gangetic plains, western India and Deccan, dating roughly between fourth to sixth centuries AD is the concern in this chapter. The point of reference central to this iconographical analysis is that it is treated on the basis of variations and evolution. This is done with due consideration to the sculptors practice, which relates to the issue of invention of corresponding form in conjunction with the ideas and its developments . The hypothesis of the three phases in the evolution of iconographical visualization that has been employed (discussed in this and the two chapters to follow), accommodate (notwithstanding the limitations) details and two different typological variations within these three broad phases of changes. Often, the textual descriptions of iconographical formulas are hardly of any value in this study, except that these provide very general impressions of icon-making of a relatively later date. The details of sculptural visualization, hence, requires to be studied on a comparative basis, constantly taking an overview of visual manifestations in varied time and space continuum, while considering the specific cases.

Possibly, it need not be argued whether or not the specificities of icons evolve through a series of related innovations. However, we cannot take it for granted either. Quite often the sculptural materials available of a particular region and time do not necessarily show iconographic relatedness, and possibly these exceptions could be considered as the innovations of different guilds of craftsmen in translating the given idea into equivalent sculptural forms . The question is whether the hypothetical phases of development indicate a unilinear progression within a particular region and inter-region (having implication upon chronology and date), or whether the tradition of visualization exemplify a pattern of a series of broken and uneven development, which continuously allowed exceptions and aberrations, creating the body of material we are dealing with, as a series of amorphous and unrelated configurations. The overall nature of the material, however do not allow such a conclusion. Alternatively, it should be possible to recognize deviations and digressions in the modes of visualizations within the overarching evolutionary patterns, resulting in the disruption of the neat schema of unilinear progression. In the analysis of the three broad phases of iconographical evolution it would be evident that the tradition(s) of visualization in various regions definitely followed a broad pattern of evolution, illustrating the changing over from a relatively simple mode of iconography to that of a complex kind. Significantly, if seen in comparative terms, this tallies inter-regionally too, the study of which is within the scope of the present work. However, the interaction between distant regions in terms of formal details of the icons appear to be rather limited, since we notice that the schema predominant in one region is largely distinct from other regions. Yet, verbal ideas of different nature (religious, theological conceptions with regard to a specific deity, etc.) appear to have had extensive momentum, which cut across the boundaries of time and space, although the plastic translation and interpretations of these very ideas often differed.

The analysis of Saptamātṛkā sculptures of all regions and periods involves tackling a great deal of complexities and reckoning with a number of limitations. This is mainly due to two reasons. Firstly, the lack of dated sculptures, and the paucity of related informations from the inscriptions, leave the art historian with little concrete basis for building up a conclusive chronology. Further, the sculptures removed from their original settings, cannot be analyzed in terms of their original sequential order and number. The sites from where the sculptures have derived, in some cases have given rise to complex issues regarding dating and chronology. The second major problem is the iconographical variations, inconsistencies and the resulting complexities. The absence of relevant literary data in explaining the peculiarities of sculptural representations complicate the issues of evolution. The limitations, such as inability of reading the iconographical details of a group or individual sculptures, (due to breakage or weathering) confusion regarding the original number of the group, classification of the particular groups (or many possible groups) from among the materials now scattered all over the world etc., impose much constrains.

Probably due to these, even after the publications of very many research papers by different archaeologists and art historians, a clarity of the evolution of iconography still remains to be attained. Another reason for this is due to the limited scope of such publications, which concern only with developments of a brief period or region, thus not allowing an understanding of the totality of the developments, let alone the inter-regional comparisons. Discussions of Mātṛkā sculptures, either in terms of iconography or features of style have been also found in books dealing with the art of a particular region or period. Specific points of each of these have been included in the contexts of relevant discussions. A more recent publication of a book by Katherine Harper on the subject is largely a work compensating such fragmentary understanding.[1] The analysis of underlying schema in the evolutionary development within and outside a particular region, is however not within the scope of this publication.

Ancient Indian art history, in the more recent decades had been developing in the direction of micro studies; singling out periods, regions, iconographical forms and single monuments. Clarity of the developmental stages of the Gupta period style, for instance, has by now been made more or less clear. Hence, the dating and chronology of Mātṛkā sculptures during the early phase, in this region is more or less free of controversies. In contrast, though significant attempts have been made by scholars since last thirty years or so in building up an insight into the developmental sequences of style and iconography of western Indian sculptures, controversies and confusions still persist.

The research publications on the issues concerning the dating of the early phase of western Indian sculptures have been a consistent concern of U.P. Shah.[2] His persistent viewpoint had been regarding the importance of the sculptural findings from Devnimori and Samalaji in establishing the early school of sculpture in western India, which according to him were influential factors in the development of fifth century Gupta style at Sarnath. Whether this could be verified or not, he persistently speculated upon a Kṣatrapa art heritage during fourth century AD, independent of Kuṣāṇa art at Mathura. Further, according to him, "to this development of western Indian sculptural art, direct Greek, Scythian, Parthian, Roman and Gandhara influences"[3] have contributed. His dating of Samalaji sculptures, as ranging from the closing years of fourth century to the mid-sixth century AD is based on the dating of Devnimori sculptures as prior to AD 375.[4] The chronology and stylistic development of Samalaji sculptures were thus linked partially with the Gandhara art developments. Most of these conclusions await critical evaluation.

The simultaneous explorations of related materials, specifically that of Mātṛkā sculptures from Tanesara, Jagat, Amjhara, etc. by R.C. Agrawala,[5] have brought out the affiliation of these groups with Samalaji, which have added up to the iconographical complexities in the study of Mātṛkā sculptures in western India. The propinquity of the issues in studying the related groups of Mātṛkā sculptures, has thus opened up larger dimension of their iconographical peculiarities.

The more recent research publication by Sara L. Schastok,[6] on Samalaji and the related sculptures of western India is significant in many ways. Considering the close stylistic resemblance between all the available Samalaji sculptures, the author proposes a shorter chronology, ranging within less than a century, which contradicts with the longer chronology proposed by U.P. Shah. Further, she divided the seventeen Mātṛkā sculptures which have very close stylistic similarity, into three separate groups, dating between AD 520 to 540.[7] After establishing the stylistic chronology of Samalaji sculptures in the light of evidences from the related Gupta sculptural activity in general, and specifically of the Mandsor area and the evidences from south western Rajasthan, the author goes on to discuss the iconography of Mātṛkās. As far as the discussions on the development of Mātṛkā sculptures are concerned, this study is an advancement over the earlier partial understandings. Picking up the suggestions of R.C. Agrawala and Pratapaditya Pal regarding the controversial Mātṛkā sculptures (those without *āyudhas* and *vāhanas*) as Kṛttikās, the author attempts to prove coalescement of "different heptad concepts and traditions of Mātṛkā-worship within a single group of sculptures".[8] In this context the development of Mātṛkā sculpture of Gupta period is reviewed. The disagreements to some of the above speculations, due to differences of approach have resulted in differing conclusions in the present publication, and these are incorporated in the relevant contexts.

The Early Iconographic Typologies : Central India

In the previous chapters, it has been made evident that the concept of Saptamātṛkās had not been crystallized during Kuṣāṇa period, and as would be clear from the following discussion, this took place during late fourth century AD. During this time two iconographical types of the seven goddesses came to be created, and subsequently sculptural representations proliferated, within and outside the confines of Madhyadesa. By late fifth and early sixth centuries, the Mātṛkā images were made at distant regional centres of western India, Deccan, and possibly also in eastern India by the second half of the sixth century.

As noted in the previous chapter, the sculpture depicting Skanda and the *Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnī*s (or the Kṛttikās) from Dhangaon (*Pl.* 16) is the earliest known representation of seven goddesses, which is conceptually different from the proper Saptamātṛkās. The earliest seated and standing Saptamātṛkā icons derive their iconographic typology from the Kuṣāṇa prototypes such as the above example, and more pertinently from the already discussed mother and child images of various goddesses in the Kuṣāṇa period.

Apart from the above, a few fragmentary Kuṣāṇa period sculptures depicting a goddess and the child Skanda have also come to be noted. One such sculptural fragment hailing from Mathura, portrays a playful child between the legs of the seated mother (*Pl.* 18). The right hand of the child holds a cock, and confirms the identification of it as Skanda. Another example (*Pl.* 19) preserved only below the waist, depicts a goddess seated on a high seat in a variation of the *pralaṁbapāda* the feet are crossed and placed side-ways. A peacock is present near the feet of the goddess, which is a prefiguration of such iconographic typology common to later Saptamātṛkā images, of course with variations. Part of the left hand and the palm of the figure is seen on the seat of the goddess, and the other hand possibly held a child. Yet another fragmentary sculpture from Mathura represent a figure seated on a high seat, holding a child placed on her left thigh. (*see* Harper, 1989, fig. no. 15) The figure is mutilated above the waist, so also is the right leg of the goddess, and the lower portion of the seat. On stylistic grounds all these sculptures can be dated to fourth century AD N.P. Joshi identifies the above sculpture as depicting Skanda and Mātṛkā.[9] No specific attributes remain, supporting the identification. However, it may be noted that the above two sculptures are large and so a certain importance in cultic terms can be imagined.

A sculpture having similar iconographical details is noticed at Mahudi, (Kotiyarka shrine, north Gujarat, *see* U.P. Shah,1960, fig. no. 40). It can be assigned a date of mid-sixth century

AD. The image does not belong to any known Saptamātṛkā group of the region. R.C. Agrawala and U.P. Shah,[10] identifies it as Pārvatī or Skandamātā. The lack of any specific attribute, such as a *śakti* (despite the presence of a peacock), does not allow the identification of the sculptures as Kaumārī. In fact, *śakti* is one of the prominent attribute of Kaumārī and Skanda in the contemporary examples of these deities. Hence, the identification of these as Pārvatī and Skanda can be agreed upon. But, in case if these could be considered as representing Kaumārī, it would appear that, before the crystallization of the Saptamātṛkā concept, Kaumārī was independently depicted. The argument, however is not conclusive, since no other independent Mātṛkā images belonging to this period, from among the Saptamātṛkā goddesses have been noticed till now.

In central India the earliest known Saptamātṛkā icons are located at Udayagiri. The caves in which they are situated are dated by inscription. The inscription inside the Cave No. 7 informs the visit of Gupta king Candra along with his minister Virasena during AD 401-402 at the site, in order to build the shrine dedicated to Śambhu.[11] On the basis of paleography this inscription is co-eval with another inscription found on the exterior of the Cave No. 6[12] which houses two groups of Saptamātṛkā panels. The third group is located outside Cave No. 4.

Though highly weathered, these provide valuable informations regarding one of the early iconographic typology of the Saptamātṛkās. On the outside north wall of Cave No. 4, to the right of the doorway is the Saptamātṛkā sub-shrine which houses nine figures. Skanda on the extreme left of the group is identifiable since the wall on the back of the figure faintly preserve the outline of a cock placed on a standard. Mātṛkās, from the details of which are preserved, can be read as seated in *pralaṁbapāda*. It can be inferred that each of the goddesses carried a child since, at least in one case it is discernible.[13] Most significantly each of the goddesses were originally differentiated by the *āyudha*-emblem depicted on the back wall. From among these, behind the second figure from the left, (which is the traditional place of Maheśvarī) a *triśūla* is preserved. Though the ninth figure on the extreme right is thoroughly mutilated, in the light of other examples can be presumed to be that of Śiva.

The shrine of Cave No. 6, which according to the inscription originally housed an image of Śambhu, is now empty. The iconographic programme of the exterior of the cave includes images of Viṣṇu, Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Skanda and Gaṇeśa. The two Mātṛkā sub-shrines are located on the right side of the cave and are separated by a short wall. Though both the groups are highly weathered, few observations can be made. The iconographic details of both the caves appear to be similar to that of the Cave No. 4. In the first (Cave No. 6 A, *Pl.* 20) no particular goddess can be identified. The last figure on the right, presumably Cāmuṇḍā is seated on a separate pedestal. Traces of halos can be seen behind the heads of the Mātṛkās. On the left wall of the second (Cave No. 6 B) Skanda can be identified, who is seated on a peacock. Similar to the Cave No. 4, behind each of the Mātṛkā figures are the identity emblems placed on separate staffs.

These three sets of Mātṛkā groups provide adequate informations so far as the requirement of interpretations regarding one of the early iconographical typology.[14] But before going into these it is necessary to review two other closely related early example of Saptamātṛkā group for a more conclusive understanding.

Slightly later or even contemporary to the Udayagiri examples, is the Saptamātṛkā group carved on the side of a cliff between the villages of Badoh and Pathari. (*Pl.* 21) On the right, immediately after the image of Cāmuṇḍā is an inscription, of the fifth century AD Gupta characters.[15] The badly damaged inscription mentions an otherwise unknown Mahārāja Jayatsena, who is styled *viśveśvara* (laterally, lord of the world). The name of the district is lost due to weathering. The recorded date is also lost. It is likewise not certain, whether the inscription dates from the reign of Mahārāja Jayatsena or goes down to that of one of his descendants, as the words following Jayatsena are missing.[16] N.P. Joshi mentions that the inscription refers to the divine mothers as *bhagavato mātaraḥ*.[17]

On the extreme right of the relief is a male figure seated in *lalitāsana* on a high throne, which is slightly larger than those occupied by Mātṛkās. (*Pl.* 22) It is only the *ūrdhvaretas* aspects of the male figure, that enables the identification as that of Śiva. The hair of the image is arranged in rows of curling wavy pattern, similar to that of a peri wig. The deity is adorned with a necklace and an *yajñopavīta*.

All the images including that of Śiva are two armed and single-headed. None of the images have *vāhanas*. The goddesses do not carry children. All the goddesses are seated in *pralaṁbapāda*, on separate seats, very much similar to some of the Kuṣāṇa period Mātṛkās.[18] The three figures next to Śiva carry *āyudhas* in their left hands, which are only partially mutilated. Attempts had been made by scholars to identify these figures on the basis of the presumed attributes. The first goddess next to Śiva *(Pl.* 22) appears to be carrying a lotus and hence R.C. Agrawala identifies the figures as Brahmāṇī.[19] N.P. Joshi suggests that, the lotus that the figure holds is a continuation of the Kuṣāṇa representation of Lakṣmī and hence considers the figure to be that of Lakṣmī.[20] It may be noted that lotus in the hand as an emblem is rarely found in the later sculptures of Brahmāṇī, though she is often represented as being seated on lotus. However, considering that the position of the goddess at the beginning of the series, and also due to the association of lotus, it may possibly be the representation of Brahmāṇī. Next two figures (*Pl.* 22) seem to be carrying long weapons, either *triśūla, śakti* or a staff. R.C. Agrawala identifies the second and third figures as Maheśvarī and Vaiṣṇavī.[21] The identification of the second figure as that of Maheśvarī is again only a probability, as the top part of the *āyudha* she holds is broken, and hence the identification cannot be conclusive. The identification of third figure as Vaiṣṇavī is not acceptable as the *āyudha* which she carries is a spear like long object, which cannot possibly be taken to resemble any object normally associated with Vaiṣṇavī. On the other hand the figure may be identified as Kaumārī. The particular hair style, namely *śikhaṇḍaka*, of the figure also confirms this identification. Further, the position of the goddess as the third among the later Saptamātṛkā groups also reinforces the identification of the goddess as Kaumārī. Michael Meister identifies the first three figures as Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī and Vaiṣṇavī — "a proper triad of Brāhmanic consorts".[22] Apart from the fact that these are not the consorts of Brāhmanical gods, the identity of the third goddess cannot be Vaiṣṇavi since she holds a long spear-like object in her hand. K. Harper supports the identification of these goddesses as Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī and Kaumārī.[23]

The identification of the fifth, sixth and seventh figures is not possible due to the damage of the attributes. However, as per the later Saptamātṛkā iconography, these are the placements of Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī and Aindrī. Cāmuṇḍā on the far left is clearly recognizable due to the emaciated body and the long thin sinewy neck. (*Pl.* 23) Her hair style is unlike that of any of the other figures, which spread out behind the head and run down over the shoulders. The *kapāla,* placed on the ground between her feet is yet another identification mark of the goddesses.

A severity and awesomeness is discernible in the tight upright posture and the wide open eyes of the figures. According to J.C. Harle, "A certain grotesqueness is heightened, in several cases, by abnormally short legs. Only Śiva, the leader of this grim crew, appears more relaxed and his wig-like head-dress, so typical of the early Gupta period, even lends him a certain urbanity. He is very close to Udayagiri cave figures, and the faces of the Mātṛkās very round and full, with large wide open eyes, also recall those figures, with their markedly provincial characteristics, it is difficult to say whether this group is earlier or later than the Udayagiri sculptures."[24]

Unlike at Udayagiri, where Skanda is an important component in the iconography, the absence of the same at Badoh-Pathari is significant, probably due to the fact that the deity had only of a secondary importance in the Mātṛkā ritual worship, in comparison with Śiva. As noted above, the Mātṛkā groups at Udayagiri are integrated within the iconographic programme of Śaivaite caves. This is so at Badoh-Pathari also. The *Caturmukha Liṅga* on the left of this Mātṛkā group, firmly establishes the Śaivaite affiliation. The primary *Śaiva* affiliation, is followed closely by that of Skanda. While the *Śaiva* context of Mātṛkā-worship remain as a major factor throughout, the latter gets dropped and replaced by Gaṇeśa soon enough. At Udayagiri, an inference of the cultic significance of Mātṛkās can be made, since they are housed in sub-shrines. There is a definite order in which Mātṛkās were arranged in both the sites. Apart from the positional identity of each of the goddesses they were also clearly differentiated by the *āyudha*s, though during this earliest phase the *vāhana*s as a means of distinguishing feature has not been employed at both the sites. Children is not a conspicuous component in both the site, the possible exception is only the Cave No. 6 A example at Udayagiri. All the goddesses are two-handed and single-headed, which is an aspect of the early phase of Saptamātṛkā iconography.

The Besnagar Saptamātṛkā group has been ascribed a date between *c.* AD 400-415.[25] On the basis of stylistic consideration, this particular group, though having period affinity with the Badoh-Pathari and Udayagiri sculptures, show a greater refinement and hence may be dated to a slightly later date.[26] But, this could also indicate that these sculptures were an undertaking of a more evolved guild, working at Besnagar, and contemporary to Udayagiri and Badoh-Pathari activity.

All the sculptures in the Besnagar group are carved in full round and are of large dimension (unbroken sculptures measure 4 ft x 2 ft).[27] Six sculptures of the group are housed in Archaeological Museum at Gwalior and the seventh one is in the National Museum, New Delhi. (*Pl.* 24 to 26) According to Harle, perhaps a fragmentary bust of a female figure in the Vidisha Museum is yet another piece belonging to the same set.[28]

In the relatively well preserved examples the figures can be seen seated on independent thrones. In some of them, children are intact, which is a significant feature distinguishing them from the first typology. It may be speculated that the damaged images were also accompanied by children. All the figures are two-handed, a feature similar to the first typology. Even in the best preserved Besnagar examples there is no indication that the goddesses held *āyudha*s, which also is a distinguishing feature between the two typologies. The images are also devoid of *vāhana*s, which could have been carved on their pedestals, which is a feature of early phase of iconography. Due to the above reasons the possibility of the identification of any of the specific goddess from among the Besnagar Mātṛkās is doubtful. Yet, it may be noted that a distinctive and particularized approach is employed in the representation of each the figure, especially noticeable is the variations in the hair styles. One of the figures (which might have occupied the central position in the group) is seated in *lalitāsana* (*Pl.* 25), and indicate her conjectural identification as Vaiṣṇavī. The rest of the figures are seated in *pralaṁbapāda*, with their knees either drawn together or apart; these as such cannot be used for differentiating the specific goddesses. The figures are seen with varieties of simple necklaces. Anklets are also present in such images where feet and legs remain. Four of the figures wear divided circle earrings. At least two figures wear a piece of cloth across the breasts, and one of them (*Pl.* 24) have a *jaṭājūṭa* like hairdo. The figure is relatively more austere and hence may be the representation of Brahmāṇī. As in the case of Badoh-Pathari Mātṛkās, these figures too are devoid of halos.

D.R. Patil and R.C. Agrawala suggest that the Mātṛkās from Besnagar, represent the *Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnī*s, (or Kṛttikās), who had assumed the role of mothers to Skanda.[29] However, it is not possible to validate the identification with any specific evidences. Their decorated and bejewelled personalities, with distinctly varied costumes and hair styles are quite contradictory, if they are to be considered as the austere wives of the seven sages. Any common and specific indication in the hair style (for instance, the *jāṭajūṭa* type) could have supported their identification as *Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnī*s. These leave very little validity for them to be considered as Kṛttikās. Another important fact is also that the Dhangaon (Mathura) panel (*Pl.* 16) is more securely identifiable as Kṛttikās on the basis of iconographical traits such as *kamaṇḍalu* and the same type of the costume worn by all the figures.

Alternatively, if we can imagine that the guild working at Besnagar (with or without the mutual knowledge) had been trying to give form to the Saptamātṛkā theme differently from that of the guilds of Udayagiri and Badoh-Pathari, it may not be very difficult to consider the Besnagar goddess as Saptamātṛkās. One major limitation in this identification is the absence of any image having any particular trait that indicate the presence of Cāmuṇḍā among the group, especially since her distinct iconographical presence is conclusively evident in the Badoh-Pathari version. Could it be possible that the Besnagar guild opted for a pleasant looking Cāmuṇḍā, (such a possibility cannot be entirely ruled out, considering the prevalence of such a typology of Cāmuṇḍā in western India) whose identity was recognized by the seventh position alone ? However, it may be noted that one image (*Pl.* 26) among Besnagar has a vertically placed third eye, which may be identified as that of Cāmuṇḍā. Further, no image of Śiva, Skanda, or Gaṇeśa have come to light along with these Mātṛkās. The last mentioned, however can be overlooked considering the possibility of loss of these icons. Judging from the available evidences, it may be suggested that these goddesses exemplify a formative stage in the iconography of Saptamātṛkās. The guild responsible for its creation had not assimilated the militant aspect of the Mātṛkās deriving from *Purāṇa* sources (note the absence of *āyudha*s), but interpreted them primarily as mothers with an accentuation of their motherly disposition. This can be interpreted as an aspect deriving from Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā traditions. This iconographic detail is a pivotal sign in the Mātṛkā iconography of later times which is not attested in the literary sources. Hence the Besnagar Saptamātṛkā images exemplify a transitional stage, the prominent trait of which fuses with other iconographical elements forming the composite meaning levels in the later representations.

The Early Iconographical Typology : Western India

The present section focuses upon the earliest phase of Mātṛkā iconography in western India, and also lead to a comparison with the typologies developed in central India. The closely related Mātṛkā sculptures from the unified cultural zone of Rajasthan and Gujarat are clubbed together and compared with, in order to form a comprehensive picture of the evolutionary process therein.

A major problem which we are unable to deal in detail in the ambit of the present knowledge, is regarding the pre-fifth century regional Mātṛkā tradition in western India. Though there are scanty evidences of mother goddess sculptures in terracotta, hailing from Samalaji, Amreli, Junagarh, etc., these do not give a comprehensive picture of the aspects of goddess-worship or specifically of the nature of mother and child motif in this region. The highly mutilated terracotta sculpture of Mother-Goddess from Samalaji is seated in *godohikāsana*, akin to the Kuṣāṇa type of Mātṛkās.[30] (*Pl.* 27) The remaining parts of a child, seen on the left knee of the figure enable a comparison with the contemporary examples from Mathura. The sculpture cannot lend itself to any further interpretation, also due to the non-availability of other similar examples. Yet, generally it can be said that the motif of mother and child had been known to the western Indian sculptors, though only to a relatively less extent compared to central India.

The Mātṛkā sculptures which are devoid of *vāhana*s and *āyudhas* are designated as belonging to the early phase of Mātṛkā iconography in western India. This proposition is in accordance with the previously discussed second typology of Mātṛkā iconography in Madhyadeśa. Yet, the exact time bracket of this phase in western India appears to be a puzzling issue, the foremost reason for this is the already mentioned lack of dated sculptures. The possibility of assigning a definite time duration based on comparative stylistic analysis between the sculptures of Madhyadeśa and western India is also limited due to the distinct regional qualities of western Indian sculptures.

It appears that the initial inflow of outside sources, evident at Devnimori, particularly from the Gandhara style, subsided largely in the subsequent periods, which simultaneously enabled the sculptors of western India to develop an autonomous style from fifth century AD onwards,[31] based on the earlier eclectic exposures, absorption and synthesis. Due to such rupture in the early development, the dating of sculptures is bound to be based on internal stylistic comparisons alone, wherein even minor variation in style will have to be taken note of, while considering the chronology. The relevance of such an approach would be evident while analyzing the Mātṛkā groups from Samalaji and Amjhara. The possibility of outside influence is not ruled out totally, particularly while considering the sculptural style of Tanesara group of Mātṛkās.

Among the Mātṛkā sculptures belonging to the early phase, the two groups hailing from Devnimori and Samalaji respectively appears to be the earliest. The seven independent images of Mātṛkās, belonging to one single group hailing from Devnimori, have been published by U.P. Shah and R.N. Mehta[32] (*Pls.* 28 & 29). On the stylistic grounds R.N. Mehta agrees upon the fifth century date proposed by U.P. Shah, and also recognizes the close affinity of styles between the two images discussed by U.P. Shah with the other five images. The two figures discussed by U.P. Shah are identified as Bhadrā or Yaśodā (*Pl.* 28). R.N. Mehta prefers to consider them as Mātṛkās. Their identification as Kṛttikā has been proposed by R.C. Agrawala.[33] Schastok also maintains that they are possibly representation of Kṛttikās.[34]

The sculptures under consideration are relatively small (measuring approximately 20 x 9 inches) compared to later Samalaji and other examples. Unlike the early Mātṛkā groups from central India which are seated, the early western Indian type are in standing posture with gentle body flexions. Except for one figure, (which is preserved only above the torso) all other figures hold children in different manners. Large plain halos are the only motif which testifies their divinity. The pedestals and the feet are not preserved, and hence it is difficult to conclusively establish the absence of *vāhana*s. One of the figures holds a rattle in the right hand (*Pl.* 29). Another figure wears an *oḍhṇī* like garment over the head (*Pl.* 28), which has led U.P. Shah to identify the figure as Bhadrā or Yaśodā, as this mode of wearing the garment is still seen among the present-day cowheard ladies of Abhīra and Rabārī communities. Apart from the other considerable variation in the ornamentation, the two figures are shown with leaves as part of their hair decorations. These are rather crudely incised on the halos. Compared to the other examples having similar motif, this is to be considered as a pointer for the sculptures to be of early period. Yet, the carving as such is highly developed. The precision and economy of the details, the compact and soft rounded volumes are indicative of an early dating, in comparison to later Samalaji sculpture. Further, they have smiling faces, narrow waists, folds of flesh in the neck and the waist and rather heavy garments. Though compact in the treatment of modelling, this group of sculptures show relatively less sophistication and preserves simplicity compared to the later Samalaji sculptures and could be ascribed a date in the mid or late fifth century AD.

The image of a single Mātṛkā mentioned as hailing from Vartol[35] (*Pl.* 30) is stylistically close to some of the sculptures of Mātṛkās from Samalaji (compare *Pl.* 30 & *Pl.* 31). The image under consideration is standing in *tribhaṅga*, with right hand kept akimbo on the flexed hip. Part of the left hand is broken off, but the palm holding the hand of a child standing on the pedestal is visible. Part of the halo is preserved on the right side of the goddess's head. Sara Schastok considers another much mutilated figure hailing from Vartol as also belonging to this group.[36] Stylistically these two figures are quite dissimilar and hence cannot be considered as belonging to one group.

U.P. Shah identifies the figure from Vartol as Nanda or Yaśodā (*Pl.* 30) and suggests a date not later than fourth century AD.[37] According to him, there is a close stylistic affinity with the Gandhara examples, especially observed in the drapery. He also mentions that the modelling of the torso and the abdomen is comparable with Kuṣāṇa sculptures from Mathura.[38] The *tribhaṅga* is not convincing, and the figuration lacks organic unity. Schastok assigns *ca.* AD 525 date for the sculpture. The lack of organic unity and sophistication, especially in comparison with some of the Samalaji sculptures do not support such a late dating. The last quarter of fifth century AD date would be more logical.

Four images of Mātṛkās identifiable as belonging to one group[39] (group-A) appears to be the earliest among the four different groups of Mātṛkās retrieved from Samalaji (*Pls.* 31 to 33 and for the fourth ***see*** S. Schastok, Fig. 14). One figure (*Pl.* 31) is relatively better preserved in the group, though its left hand and the portion below the ankles, including pedestal is missing. Another figure is preserved above the hip. The third figure is the mutilated representation of the earliest available representation of Cāmuṇḍā from this region (*Pl.* 32). The fourth figure is badly worn off, yet the characteristic posture and the drapery folds are akin to the better preserved ones. The image of Cāmuṇḍā is large bellied and has heavy untied *jaṭā* which is modelled in long curly locks, flowing down on three sides. The remaining part of a skull is visible in the hair above the forehead.[40] The figure is unadorned except for a snake, which is worn around the neck and is shown passing down along the right arm. Other similar representations of Cāmuṇḍā are found from Samalaji (group-B) (*Pl.* 60), Tanesara (*Pl.* 34) and Tintoi (*Pl.* 64). However, the second example from Samalaji and the one from Tintoi have slightly modified iconography for the goddess.

The Samalaji group-A figures have a close stylistic similarity with the Mātṛkā sculpture from Vartol discussed above, though their dimensions are quite different. Considering the rather over-emphasized ornamentations and relatively heavy volumes of the faces and torsos, the group could be dated to late fifth century or to early sixth century AD.[41]

The two Mātṛkā groups having comparable stylistic features, from Tanesara can be ascribed to the early iconographical phase (*Pls.* 34 to 37 & 41). In the 1959 article, R.C. Agrawala has mentioned fifteen Mātṛkās in the open enclosure at Tanesara.[42] In 1961 he published seven of these goddess sculptures along with a figure of Skanda, an image of what he identified as Yakṣa (?) and a torso of Gaṇeśa.[43] Including the two more female figures, one in the National Museum, New Delhi, and the other in the Los Angeles County Museum, mentioned to be from the same site, increases the total number of the goddesses into nine. Due to the inaccessibility to each of these figures, it is difficult to compare their measurements, so as to determine the original grouping of the figures.[44] However, on the basis of the variations in the details of the garments, two separate groups can be tentatively classified. The eight figures in the group-A, including that of Skanda, and Śiva(?), have pleats of lower garment hanging down between the legs till the ankles (*Pls.* 35 & 36). Except in the male figures and that of Cāmuṇḍā, (*Pl.* 34) the lower garments include decoratively pleated frills hanging in the middle from the girdle. The two male figures in this group have thick *kaṭibandha* around their hips. Further, the female figures in this group have identical *uttarīya*, passing through both the shoulders and falling down between the hands. In the case of the three female figures in group-B, the lower garments worn around the waists, is modelled without pleats hanging between their legs (*Pls.* 37 & 41). But their garments show variations, especially in the way *uttarīya* are worn. Two figures wear a kind of *oḍhṇī* over their heads. The *uttarīya* of one of the figures covers the left breast and the shoulder. In the other two figures the *uttarīya* passes over the right hand only, leaving the left hand free.

Iconographically the two male figures, one of Skanda[45] and the other presumably of Śiva[46] appear to be part of group-A Mātṛkās. Though rather worn out the image of Śiva has *jaṭājūṭa* and the *ūrdhvaretas* aspect.[47] The Gaṇeśa image might have belonged to the second group of Mātṛkās (group-B). The precise dating of these sculptures is difficult, as no other comparable sculptures are known form the site. Schastok suggests a date not later than *ca.* AD 540-50 and not earlier than AD 530.[48] According to Pratapaditya Pal these groups are datable to *ca.* AD 550.[49] As per the iconographical considerations they could be placed even earlier to AD 530.

Iconographical meaning of Tanesara Mātṛkās are complex issues. Except for their halos, there is no other indication for them being images of divinities. R.C. Agrawala, Pratapaditya Pal and after them Sara Schastok, identify them as Kṛttikās.[50] However, there is no specific attribute among the goddesses which could prove this identification conclusively. Apart from certain similarities in the clothing and ornamentation, the goddesses are endowed with personalities of their own with distinct hair-ornamentation, postures and manners of holding the children. The most significant figure among these, in the context of the argument for them being Saptamātṛkā, is the four-armed image of the goddess (*Pl.* 34). She also has a large belly[51] similar to the Cāmuṇḍā image discussed above, belonging to Samalaji group-A (*Pl.* 32). In three of the four hands, she holds a horn, a *śakti* and a vessel hung on a string in the normal right, in the normal left and in the upper left hands respectively. The *śakti* that the goddess holds is peculiarly thick. A snake is worn around the neck. Her hair spread in both sides of the head are *jaṭā* in thick regular locks. On the basis of the *śakti* held by the figure, Pratapaditya Pal identifies the figure as that of Kaumārī as a Yoginī.[52] This is an unlikely identification. First of all, during the first half of sixth century AD the only two figures among the Mātṛkā groups, who are endowed with four hands are those of Cāmuṇḍā and Śiva. The evidences from Madhyadeśa may be referred to in this context. Cāmuṇḍā is the only Devī *śakti* amongst the Mātṛkās and it is she alone who manifests as supreme goddess among them, in the examples like Naharghati and Rajghati panels from Deograh (*Pls.* 46 & 47). Secondly, the attributes the goddess holds in the hands can be seen present in the more well established icons of Cāmuṇḍā. The *śakti* is seen present in the emaciated figure of Cāmuṇḍā hailing from Samalaji (group-C) (*Pl.* 68). The blow horn which is held by Tanesara image is also found in the same Cāmuṇḍā image, wherein the object is being held between the two left hands. The stringed vessel which the Tanesara image holds is most likely to be a *kapāla* or a skull bowl, which normally is the attribute of Cāmuṇḍā, though in this case it is fashioned differently. The snake which is worn around the neck is also a striking common feature, depicted in the Samalaji images of Cāmuṇḍā (*Pls.* 32, 60, 64 & 68).

On the basis of similar examples of Cāmuṇḍā from Samalaji, Tanesara and Tintoi, it appears that during fifth and in the first half of sixth century an otherwise uncommon form of Cāmuṇḍā was in vogue in western India. This is to be considered as a very special regional preference, as we know that already in the early fifth century AD at Badoh-Pathari the emaciated form of the goddesses had been innovated by the sculptors (*Pl.* 23). In the sixth century AD we have similar evidences from Deograh (*Pls.* 46 & 47). The Tanesara Cāmuṇḍā and the slightly modified examples from Samalaji and Tintoi can point to an evolutionary development in the Cāmuṇḍā's iconography in western India. Whether emaciated or not, the basic concept is the same. In both the types the accent is upon the terrible and the uncouth aspects. The large belly, the skull as a head adornment, multiple arms, dangerous weapons, the snake encircling the body, are all thus symbolic of her malevolent and menacing nature. Yet, I am tempted to point out that there is a suggestion of Yoginī or ascetic type of personality in the non-emaciated type of Cāmuṇḍā figures. However, in the times to follow, Cāmuṇḍā iconography receives more a universal typology, visually translated in terms of emaciated body, incorporation of more deadly weapons, severed head in the hands, etc. No textual references, however can be quoted to substantiate the early phase of Cāmuṇḍā iconography in western India. It may be also noticed that in the south Indian tradition in spite of the cruel and terrible aspects of the goddesses like that of Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā, they have been presented in the most beautiful visualizations with minimum suggestions of their malevolent personality.[53] Further, at Ellora, at least in the case of two early representations of Cāmuṇḍā, belonging to Saptamātṛkā groups, the goddess is beautiful and has benign form.

At this stage of discussion, I would suggest that the identification the Tanesara goddesses as Kṛttikās be thoroughly revised. In the light of the identification of Śiva and Cāmuṇḍā along with the group, plausibility increases for them being Saptamātṛkās rather than Kṛttikās.

The Early Regional Traditions : Deccan

Within the scope of the present section, it is attempted to capitulate the early phase of Mātṛkā iconography in the two widely separated regional centres of Deccan : Elephanta and Aihole.

At Elephanta the Saptamātṛkā group (*Pls.* 38 to 40) is located at the end of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* in the western *upavarnaka*-chamber in the east wing of the Cave No. 1. In its original condition, it would have been one of the most magnificent sculptural group of its kind. The accepted date of this cave is second quarter of sixth century AD.[54] The Mātṛkā group at Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole is yet another early example in Deccan, datable to *ca.* AD 550-60 (*Pls.* 42 to 45).[55] Unlike at Elephanta, here the Mātṛkā group is located in the northern *upavarṇaka*-chamber, right at the beginning of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. Apart from this there are many more differences between these two examples, which enable one to speculate upon the two relatively autonomous traditions. Sculpturally also they belong to two different phases of evolution, and two guilds. Ravulaphadi exemplify an early phase of iconography, whereas the other shows an advanced stage related to the earlier developments in western India. The recent researches have conclusively proved the close stylistic affinity of Elephanta and the nearby sites with the contemporary developments in the north-western parts, especially with Samalaji.[56]

The stances, body flexions, and the manner in which the Mātṛkās hold their children in Elephanta are closely similar to the Samalaji examples. Conforming generally to the transitional iconographical phase of western Indian developments, Elephanta artists incorporates the concept of *vāhana* ingeniously in the iconographic schema. Although, the images of the goddesses themselves are mutilated almost beyond recognition, almost all of them can be identified with the help of the animal-standards depicted on the wall, which resemble the *dhvajastambha* design. These are seen behind, on the left sides of each of the goddesses. However, the standards do not seem to have been held by the goddesses themselves. In terms of compositional peculiarities Elephanta group is comparable to the Tintoi group of Mātṛkās. (*Pls.* 62 to 64). In both the cases, the arched body flexions and the general rhythmic flow is punctuated with the vertical components — the animal standards at Elephanta and the pilaster like structures in the Tintoi example.

The Mātṛkās are flanked on the either sides by Gaṇeśa and Skanda, who are depicted in larger dimensions than the Mothers, on the south and north walls respectively. At least some of the goddesses are four-handed. In the present state of preservation no *āyudha* can be identified in any of the Mātṛkās. After the image of Gaṇeśa (also repeated at the end of Mātṛkā group, *Pl.* 40) on the right wall, and before the Mātṛkā group proper begins, is a male figure, probably depicting Śiva (*Pl.*38). The details are badly worn out. Yet, the remaining parts of the torso indicate that the figure is of a male deity. The four-handed image has an elongated halo and a *jāṭajūṭa*. Most probably the two badly mutilated diminutive figures, on the either sides, are *gaṇa*s who attend upon the deity. The next figure is that of Brahmāṇī, whose *haṁsa vāhana* is discernible as mounted on the animal standard (*Pl.* 38). The adjacent figure and her identification marks are mutilated, but conventionally this is the place ascribed to Maheśvarī. The next figure is of Kaumārī, identifiable with the peacock on the standard. Then follows the image of Vaiṣṇavī. The Garuḍa is seen on the top of the standard. The goddess also wears a crown

(*Pl.* 39). The child on the left hip is held with the left hand. The animal standard of the next figure is mutilated. Conventionally this is the place of Vārāhī. The face of the goddess is also mutilated, but seems to have had human face. The emblem of the sixth goddess is much effaced, but can be recognized as an elephant. Conventionally this place is of Aindrī. The seventh figure has a pillared pavilion as the emblem, on the right side, unlike the other goddess (*Pl.* 40). The identification of the figure is difficult. Can the goddess be identified as Kauberī?,[57] or can it be one of the Devī *śakti* pairing with the figure next to it.[58] Conventionally the seventh among Mātṛkās is Cāmuṇḍā (*Pl.* 40). Significantly, the *tribhaṅga* of this figure is oriented to the right, which is in contrast with the flexions of the other goddesses. The seventh goddess also occupies more space than others. Further, the remaining parts of two extra hands are also discernible. Significantly, the forehead of the figure has a projection, which might have been a skull adornment on the head, a convention also observed in Samalaji Cāmuṇḍā icons. If this is an image of Cāmuṇḍā, the robust iconographical typology can be interpreted as having derived from the earlier practices at Samalaji and Tanesara. The last but one figure standing next to Cāmuṇḍā is four-handed, emaciated and erect (*Pl.* 40). There is no indication for the figure to be a female, but the bulging region of the scrotum suggest that it is a male. The remaining parts of an object in the upper right hand resemble a *kartāri*. In the light of these evidences this figure may be identified as Kālabhairava among Saptamātṛkās, a tradition very often noticed in the later examples at Ellora and western India. If this is so, then Elephanta can be said to have been among the first to incorporate this component in the Saptamātṛkā iconography, even before Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole.

At Elephanta, the presence of Gaṇeśa, Śiva and Skanda (on the left wall, after the Mātṛkās and opposite to Gaṇeśa) along with Mātṛkās, present a convention comparable to the Ravulaphadi example. Compositionally the prominence of Śiva is more clearly asserted at Ravulaphadi, whereas at Elephanta, Skanda and Gaṇeśa are given more prominence, at least in terms of the spatial distribution. But at the same time, it may be noted that they are not totally integrated within the Mātṛkā group, whereas Śiva in his two forms, once in the beginning of the Mātṛkās as a creative symbol and at the end as a symbol of destructive power is well integrated in the iconographical meaning. Sara Schastok opines that at Elephanta Kārttikeya's (i.e., Skanda's) identification with Śiva is the reason for his replacing Śiva in the company of Mātṛkās. "He (Skanda) has been elevated to the position of Śiva . . . through a merger of their identities intended to reconcile two different types of Mātṛkā groups : the Kṛttikās in the company of Skanda and the Saptamātṛkās contained by Śiva and Gaṇeśa. At another level, this Skanda-Śiva, Gaṇeśa and the Aṣṭamātṛkās within the east wing are all emanations of the *liṅgam* at very heart of Elephanta".[59] The possibility of connecting Kṛttikās with Saptamātṛkās and the reconciliation of the two heptad concepts into one has only very narrow basis. The association of Skanda with Mātṛkās is now as a son of Śiva and does not have much significance to the central concept of Saptamātṛkās. The Elephanta Mātṛkās are the six Deva *śakti*s along with one Devī *śakti*, to be seen essentially in the context of the development of Śiva and Śakti cults, and not in the context of the tradition of Kṛttikās. The presence of Skanda and Gaṇapati are the deities imbibed into Śiva pantheon as the sons of the Purāṇic Śiva, wherein their more ancient origins are almost forgotten and are now redefined in the context of *Śaiva* cult and mythology. The same situation is much more clearly manifested in the Ravulaphadi representation of the Mātṛkā group.

Though the Cālukyans consistently referred in their several inscriptions that they were "nourished by the seven mothers", who are "seven mothers of mankind", it is rather curious that the known representations of Mātṛkās in their monuments are very few. For instance the absence of Mātṛkā images at Badami caves is quite conspicuous. The only known early example is in the Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole. This group of images is located at the beginning of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* in the northern *upavarṇaka* chamber, unlike the locations in Elephanta and Ellora caves.

Iconographically the Ravulaphadi Mātṛkā group belong to an early phase of development compared to the mid-sixth century examples from central India, western India and northern Deccan. All the goddesses, including Cāmuṇḍā are two-handed and are mostly devoid of *āyudhas*. The *vāhanas* are totally absent. Mostly the goddesses are without identification marks, yet close observation reveals the identity of at least five Mātṛkās. The lack of *vāhana*, *āyudha,* and certain other representational peculiarities are comparable to the early typology of Mātṛkās in western India and Besnagar.

The compositional details of this early group of Mātṛkās is unique. The group comprises of eight goddesses, Gaṇeśa, Skanda and ten-armed dancing Śiva. Some of the goddesses are also depicted as dancing, and hence among the known early Saptamātṛkās this is the earliest example of this kind. The diminutive figures of Gaṇeśa and Skanda are on the proper right and left of the towering Śiva Naṭarāja,[60] and their conception appear to be as child deities. Of the eight goddesses in the composition, three goddesses each occupy the right and left walls of the shrine, and two of them are on the front wall flanking either side of Śiva.

The group opens in the western wall with three-headed Brahmāṇī, who carries a *kamaṇḍalu* and an *akṣamālā* in the left and right hands respectively (*Pl.* 42). The manner of holding these objects is not yet conventionalized, and appear to be naturalistic. Like in the cases of other goddesses Brahmāṇī also wears a tall crown. She stands in *svastika-pāda* with right leg in *kuñcita*. The figure next to Brahmāṇī is Maheśvarī, who is adorned with a moon in the crown (*Pl.* 42). She has a third eye seen above the bridge of the nose. Maheśvarī stands in *samapāda-sthāna*. The third goddess is without any identification mark (*Pl.* 42). Conventionally this is the place occupied by Kaumārī. The goddess stands with a flexed body posture, and the right hand is folded and kept above the breast. The left hand is in *katyāvalaṁbita* position.[61] The left foot is raised slightly above the ground, as if about to dance.

In the upper corner of the north western wall, at the level of the goddess's crown a diminutive image of a dancing emaciated male figure is portrayed, who can be identified either as Kāla-bhairava or as that of Bhṛṅgī (*Pl.* 43).[62] If it is meant to be the latter he should have been nearer to Śiva, although, even otherwise such an identification cannot be entirely ruled out. But, if the figure is conclusively identified as a depiction of Kālabhairava, along with the Elephanta instance, this would be the second such occurrence of this deity in the company of Mātṛkās. In the later western Indian tradition, at Ellora, and in Orissa Kālabhairava is a very important component in the Mātṛkā groups. It appears that such a tradition originated simultaneously at Elephanta and Aihole, and got diffused to other centres.

The goddess on the right of Śiva holds a lotus in the left hand and probably represents Vaiṣṇavī, since in the conventional order of Mātṛkās this is the place of Vaiṣṇavī (*Pl.* 43). It can be observed that here her iconographical identity has been adapted from Śrī Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu. The goddess is in a graceful *tribhaṅga* posture and the right foot in *kuñcita-pāda* which is identical to that of Śiva, as if keeping in step with him. The two handed Gaṇeśa holds a purse-like object and a vessel full of *mōdaka* (*Pl.* 43). The two upper hands of the dancing Śiva perform *uromaṇḍalī-hasta*, while holding a cobra (*Pl.* 45). In the two right hands he holds a *ghaṇṭa*, and a *paraśu* and two other hands in *abhaya-mudrā* or *kapitha*. The lowest left hand is in *katyāvalaṁbita* posture. The normal left hand is in *ḍola-hasta*. A *nāga-yajñopavīta* is worn across the left shoulder. His *jaṭājūṭa* is highly ornate, and ís adorned with *chandrakalā*. Next to Śiva is the standing figure of Skanda. The goddess on the left of Śiva is without any identification marks (*Pl.* 45). R.S. Gupte names her as Pārvatī and opines that she does not seem to be present here as one of the Mātṛkās.[63] Among the three goddesses on the eastern wall the identity of the first figure as Vārāhī is obvious since she has the face of a boar (*Pl.* 44). There is no specific identification marks on the next figure standing in the place of Aindrī (*Pl.* 44). R.S. Gupte identifies the figure as Kaumārī due to the peacock feather in her elongated crown.[64] The last figure is Cāmuṇḍā (*Pl.* 44). She is beautiful, yet has fangs protruding from the parted lips and a skull is set in the middle of her decorated *jaṭājūta*. Her left hand is in *ḍola-hasta,* placed across her body, and the right hand is raised above in a dance movement.

Compared to the Mātṛkā group from Elephanta, the Ravulaphadi iconography of the Mātṛkās is still in an early stage of development. However, the order beginning from Brahmāṇī and ending with Cāmuṇḍā is followed. No rearrangement of the goddesses is made with the introduction of Śiva in the middle. In the case of the Mandor group of Mātṛkās, where also Śiva is shown dancing in the middle, a rearrangement of the goddesses is done, so as to facilitate Maheśvarī to be close to Śiva (*Pl.* 87). Though the identification of the figure on the left of Śiva at Ravulaphadi cannot be conclusive, considering the association of Pārvatī with Śiva-Naṭarāja, the goddess may be identified as his consort.[65] Hence, due to this, Maheśvarī remains in her conventional place unlike the Mandsor group. Further, the artist has very subtly distinguished Pārvatī from the Mātṛkās. When the lower garment of the Mātṛkās are close fitting *dhotī*s reaching up to the knees, Pārvatī's dress has been designed in such a manner that the folds of cloth hang between the legs and reach till the ankles. Her ornate *jaṭājūta*, like that of Maheśvarī is also adorned with a *candrakalā*.

Ravulaphadi Mātṛkā group is unique in the southern region of India. Standing or dancing

Mātṛkās are hardly found in the later Cālukyan, Pallava and Cola examples. However, one aspect that is common to this and the later traditions in south India is the exclusion of children along with Mātṛkās, which would be seen continuing throughout the later centuries in south India.

The Conflation of Traditions: Early Sixth Century Icons in Central India and Gangetic Plains

Keeping in view the two distinct typologies that originated in central India in the early decades of fifth century AD, the developments in Mātṛkā iconography in the period that followed till the end of the next century is the concern in this section. The conflation of the two earlier approaches in the trend towards forming a standardized version of Saptamātṛkā iconography apart, the iconographic imaginations of the sculptors can be seen ingeniously devising new features, while also incorporating varied floating elements from the fund of significatory codes available to the sculptors.

Three groups of Saptamātṛkās are known from Deogarh. Of these, the one at Rajghati and the other at Naharghati[66] (*Pls.* 46 & 47) are relatively well preserved, but the one near Eka Patthara Ki Bavadi is largely worn out. All of them are rock cut reliefs and the first two are located on the steep cliff on the bank of Betwa river, the third is near the hill water reservoir, known as the 'well of one stone'.

On the basis of stylistic considerations the group at Rajghati seems to be the earliest (*Pl.* 46). It has been assigned a sixth century AD date.[67] The stocky, physiognomy and the rigidity in the upright sitting position, links this panel with the earlier examples from Badoh-Pathari and Besnagar. Further, the *godohikāsana* posture of the goddesses is a reminiscent of the Kuṣāṇa tradition. On the basis of stylistic considerations, this group can be dated as belonging to the later half of fifth century or to early sixth century AD.

Keeping the motherly aspect of the goddesses as the primary signification, (since most of them carry children), the panels exemplify continuation and elaboration of the second typology of the earlier period. The goddesses do not carry any weapons, supports such a contention. But the possibility of a certain conflation between the earlier two typologies is also noticeable. The iconography of Cāmuṇḍā is the case in point. However, the most significant aspect is a certain tendency towards iconographical standardization that can be seen setting-in with this group. The foremost is the inclusion of Gaṇeśa and Śiva (*vīṇādhara* form) at the extreme left and right of the collective, the former being the earliest such inclusion (replacing Skanda) in this region. All the figures are two-handed except the four-handed Cāmuṇḍā. All the figures are also single headed and are without halos. The inclusion of *vāhana* is a new significant development.[68] This, apart from the positional identity of the goddesses, lend a greater sense of distinctions to them. A bull is seen behind Maheśvarī. Kaumārī and Vaiṣṇavī are seen seated on their respective bird vehicles, placed between their legs, as if riding on them. The Aindrī and the Cāmuṇḍā are seated on an elephant and a human corpse respectively. Brahmāṇī does not have a *vāhana*, but her distinguishing feature is the *jaṭājūta*. The *vāhana* of Vārāhī is obliterated. Though broken, Vārāhī's face does not appear to have been that of a boar. The children of Maheśvarī, Vārāhī and Aindrī are preserved. Placed on their left thighs they are held by the left hands of the mothers. The two-armed Śiva, holds a *vīṇā* which is also a new development. He is in *ūrdhvaretas* aspect. Seated in *lalitāsana*, his legs are tied by *yogapaṭa*. The four-handed and emaciated Cāmuṇḍā is an elaboration of the example in the first typology of the earlier period (Badoh-Pathari). The *āyudhas* in the hands, however are disfigured. The two-handed adult looking Gaṇeśa sits next to Cāmuṇḍā.

The Naharghati relief near to the inscription mentioned in the previous chapter, exemplify a further stage of iconographical development (*Pl.* 47). Svāmībhaṭa, who has dedicated this, "very costly and indestructible abode" is otherwise unknown. D.R. Sahni, who published the text, on the basis of the paleography has dated it approximately to the end of sixth century AD.[69] Iconographically it could be assigned a date earlier than this.

The mothers in the Naharghati panel are flanked on the right and left by *vīṇādhara* Śiva and Gaṇeśa. Next to Śiva is the three-faced Brahmāṇī seated on a lotus throne. Maheśvarī's mount is a lion, unlike the usual bull. She holds a child with the left hand, who is placed on the left thigh.[70] Kaumārī's peacock vehicle is depicted between the legs of the goddess. Vaiṣṇavī is seated on Garuḍa, who is depicted in human form with wings. The two-headed Vārāhī, with a frontal human face and a boar's head on the right side is a unique feature of experimentation. Aindrī is seated on an elephant. The emaciated Cāmuṇḍā's vehicle is damaged, but seems to be a *preta*. All the goddesses, except Cāmuṇḍā are two-handed and each one of them has a halo behind their heads.

The iconographical features of Maheśvarī and Vārāhi are exceptional. The former is identified with Pārvatī, considering the lion mount and the the child she carries being Gaṇeśa(?). The possibility of considering such additional elements as features of experimentation, assimilations and conflations in the Mātṛkā iconography are to be seen located within the sculptors' practice. The alternative choices that were available in innovating the iconography of particular goddesses is exemplified in the iconography of Brahmāṇī and Vārāhī also. Brahmāṇī for the first time is depicted with three faces and is seated on a lotus. Vārāhī's iconography is an exceptional instance of experimentation. The odd combination of a boar's head with the human face is not continued in the later periods, and the preferences show a choice between the either of the two.

The highly eroded Mātṛkā group at Eka Patthara Ki Bavadi, has Śiva and Gaṇapati on the either sides. All the figures appear to be two-handed and single-faced.[71] The animal mounts are indistinct and none of the Mātṛkās seem to be carrying children.

The badly damaged group of Mātṛkās hailing from Nand-Chand (group-A) is datable to the middle of sixth century AD (*Pls.* 48 to 52).[72] Five images are identifiable as Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Kaumārī and Aindrī. They are preserved only below the waist, except the image of Vaiṣṇavī, who is intact but for the missing hands. Two broken busts are also part of the same group.

Brahmāṇī (*Pl.* 48), is presented in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* on a lotus pedestal, and Kaumārī (*Pl.* 49) is seated on a high throne in *lalitāsana*. A large peacock is depicted below the right foot of the latter. The palm of the right hand is placed on the personified *śakti*, and holds the neck part of the *āyudha*, which rises above from the back of the head of the image. The depiction is similar to the representations of the *āyudhapurṣa*s in the Viṣṇu images from Gupta and post-Gupta periods. The relatively less damaged image of Vaiṣṇavī is seated in *lalitāsana* on a high throne (*Pl.* 50). The image of the Garuḍa bird in the human form combined with wings is below the left foot of the goddess. Aindrī is mounted on a crouching elephant (*Pl.* 51). The legs of the goddess are kept on either sides of the animal in *vaiśākha sthānaka* posture. A broken bust of a female figure wearing a large decorated crown, found in the same site can be identified as originally belonging to this image, which has a horizontally placed extra eye on the forehead (*Pl.* 52).

An image of Maheśvarī, preserved in the University Museum, Sagar,[73] can be included in the group of Mātṛkās from Nand-Chand on the basis of stylistic consideration as well as on the basis of certain similarity of the components in the composition. The shape and dimension of the throne, the design of the legs are identical in both the cases. Further, the *lalitāsana* posture, the large round halo behind the head of the Maheśvarī image is identical with the Vaiṣṇavī image discussed above. Maheśvarī has a large Nandī as her vehicle, on which she places her right leg. The goddess holds a child with the right hand, who is seated on her left thigh. An image of Śiva, mentioned as hailing from Gopalganj (Sagar)[74] is also preserved in the University Museum, Sagar. Stylistically this sculpture too is akin to the group of Mātṛkās discussed above. All the images, including that of Maheśvarī and *vīṇādhara* Śiva have larger rounded halos around the heads, extending down till the level below the shoulders. The eyes of the smiling goddesses are half closed, endowing them a meditative quality, a feature of Gupta classicism. In accordance with the specific characteristic of the goddesses the head ornamentations show variety of styles.

Three images of Mātṛkās and an image of Gaṇeśa,[75] hail from Muṇḍeśvarī (Rohtas, Bihar) (*Pls.* 53 to 55). Stylistically these sculptures show close affinity with the images of Mātṛkās discussed above. Yet, the slender and slightly elongated physiognomy of the Muṇḍeśvarī figures suggest a stage slightly later than the Nand-Chand examples. Hence, we may assign a date later than mid-sixth century AD to these sculptures.[76]

All the three Mātṛkās are two-handed and the heads are lost. Brahmāṇī is seated on a lotus seat in the same manner as the previous example from Nand-Chand. Here the legs tied with a *yogapaṭa* (*Pl.* 53). Significantly her left shoulder carries a *mṛgacarma* (the head of the dear is delineated clearly) in accordance with her ascetic personality. Both the hands of the goddess are placed on the knee. Though the palms are broken off, possibly they were held in the gesture of meditation. Maheśvarī and Aindrī are seated in *lalitāsana*. Under the right foot of the former, in front of the pedestal *śūlapuruṣa* is represented, which is the sole identification mark (*Pl.* 54). The left leg and part of the left hand are mutilated, yet some fragmentary remains of a child is discernible. The right hand is mutilated totally. Aindrī, (*Pl.* 54) places her right foot on the couching elephant. To the right side of the elephant, the *vajrapuruṣa* is represented. The child on the left thigh of the goddess is supported by the left hand. In the right hand she holds what looks like a two-beaded string toy.

The image of Aindrī at Bharat Kala Bhavan, said to be hailing from Amanwa (Shahabad, Bihar) is the only sculpture known from what must have been a distinct Saptamātṛkā group (*Pl.* 56). Ashar ascribes a late sixth, or perhaps even close to the middle of the century date for the sculpture.[77] Iconographically the latter is more acceptable. Seated on a low seat, the goddess carries a large *vajra* in the left hand, and the object in the other hand is indistinct. At the centre of the forehead as well as above the breasts and the shoulders, are a number of horizontally incised eyes, which is the unique feature of the image. This is in accordance with the *sahasrākṣa* epithet of Indra. The absence of animal vehicle is conspicuous. The large *vajra* in the hand of the goddess is an early example of its kind, which replaces the *āyudhapuruṣa* of the previous example. The half-closed eyes and the slight bend of the head endows a benign expression to the image. This masterfully carved image is a perfect instance of Gupta classical values.

The characteristic feature of this phase of development in central India and Gangetic plains is the experimentations in the iconographical attributes of the goddesses by different guilds of sculptors. In different sets of Saptamātṛkā groups, distinct significatory elements come to be incorporated, so also the treatments of such elements can also be seen changing from one guild to the other. Foremost among such experimentation is noticed in the incorporation of *vāhana* and *āyudha*. The idea of *vāhana* as such figure only in the late fifth century, and from then onwards till the middle of sixth century different exemplary ways of incorporating this iconographic component is noticeable. The case in point are the examples from Deogarh, Nand-Chand and Muṇḍeśvarī. Holding of the *āyudha* in the later period goes through an intermediary stage of depicting them as *āyudhapuruṣa*s.

The most important development is the conflation of the two different ideas of Mātṛkās, namely that of the motherly and the militant aspects in forming a composite, seemingly dichotomous meaning-level in the icons. The two different typologies and their two meanings in the very early examples, give way to a slow synthesis, where the incorporation of *āyudha*s and children in the very same instances endow a compatibility to the otherwise conflicting intentions. Yet, all the goddesses do not carry children. For instance, Brahmāṇī, whose ascetic personality perhaps excluded the representation of her as a mother. However, she too is interpreted as a warrior goddess, within the context of militancy of each of the Mātṛkās.[78] At Naharghati the conflation of these two ideas are done in the case of Maheśvarī by making a reference to Pārvatī's motherhood to Gaṇeśa.

Transitions : Western India

During the middle of sixth century AD in western India *vāhana*s and *āyudha*s began to be employed in the Saptamātṛkā representations. It is difficult to make out where this took place first. In fact a number of sites exemplify this trend simultaneously. The tendency towards this is noticed in the case of two Mātṛkā images from Jagat (*Pls.* 57 & 58). R.C. Agrawala who has published these images, does not ascribe any specific date, except a broad 'post-Gupta' designation.[79] The image of Aindrī (*Pl.* 57) is ascribed to *ca.* AD 540-50 by Schastok.[80] This figure can be said to be one of the earliest instances of a Mātṛkā holding an *āyudha*s as a distinguishing feature in this region. Apart from this the earlier practice of portraying motherhood as an iconographic trait is not done away with. In this image of Aindrī, apart from the *vajra* in the right hand, a child is also held in the left hip supported by the left hand. The other goddess do not hold any *āyudha* but is identifiable as Brahmāṇī due to the distinguishing feature of *jaṭājūṭa* she wears (*Pl.* 58). Her right hand is in *abhaya-hasta.* It is significant to note that, *āyudha*s are not considered as the sole mark of identity, which at times is compensated by other features attributed to them. Though Aindrī is shown with *vajra* in her hand, unlike the later representations, she is without a crown. Both Aindrī and Brahmāṇī images have been preserved with large halos around their heads. Since both the sculptures are broken below their knees, it is not possible to conclusively prove whether they had *vāhana*s or not. Both the figures are in graceful *tribhaṅga* and their half closed eyes, a mark of their origin from classical era, impart meditative tranquillity.

Two Mātṛkā images, one of Cāmuṇḍā and other of Brahmāṇī,[81] along with a Skanda image from Samalaji (group-B) belong to this phase of the Mātṛkā iconography (*Pls.* 59 to 61).[82] The swan *vāhana* of Brahmāṇī resembles the peacock, which is similar to the example from Tintoi. (*Pl.* 62). Brahmāṇī has a *jaṭājūṭa* which is decorated with foliages and jewelled ornaments (*Pl.* 59). Both the hands are broken, but with the left hand she must have held a child whose feet are discernible on the left side of the goddess. Cāmuṇḍā is portrayed as a youthful goddess (*Pl.* 60). The unruly locks of her hair fall down on both the shoulders. She has a third eye. The tiger skin the goddess wears is fastened by a *kaṭibandha*. Close observation reveals a pair of fangs between the parted lips. The fragment of a coiling snake is seen between the right arm and the torso. Only one hand remains out of the original four, which is the normal right kept in akimbo. The remaining lower part of the broken staff is seen on the left side of the pedestal. As observed in the comparable image from Tintoi, her worn off part of the head above the forehead probably was adorned with a skull. The small animal *vāhana* on the pedestal appears to be a leopard.

Both the goddesses stand in *dvibhaṅga,* without a tilt in the head and looking straight at the onlooker, with wide open eyes. Though the halos of the Mātṛkās are broken off, the accompanying Skanda image preserves the same (*Pl.* 61). The deity stands in *samabhaṅga*, holding a *śakti* and a cock in the right and left hands respectively. Considering the crisp, sensitive and organic volumes, this group is a definite advancement in plastic, form, compared to the rather relatively unrefined figures of group-A from Samalaji (*Pls.* 31 to 33). These sculptures are datable to the second quarter of sixth century AD.

Three relief fragments belonging to one Mātṛkā group originate from Tintoi (*Pls.* 62 to 64). On the basis of iconographical peculiarities this group belongs to the transitional phase. Iconography of these fragments has repeatedly been misunderstood. U.P. Shah and R.C. Agrawala have identified one of the fragment (*Pl.* 64) as representing Gaṇeśa and Pārvatī or Skandamātā. The figure of Mātṛkā along with Vīṇādhara Śiva has also been identified to be Pārvatī as Skandamātā (*Pl.* 62).[83] These figures are to be identified as Cāmuṇḍā and Brahmāṇī respectively.[84] A third fragment has images of Kaumārī and Vaisṇavī (*Pl.* 63).

The two-handed Gaṇeśa is represented as dancing in *catura* posture (*Pl.* 64). His right hand is in *kari-hasta*. Cāmuṇḍā is four-handed, wears a tiger skin, is robust and beautiful (*Pl.* 64). Her normal right hand is in *katyāvalambita* position. The normal left and upper left hand hold a bowl and a severed head. She also carries a long staff, which is placed between her left hands. The upper right hand is broken off. A pair of small animals, probably leopards, flank her on the either sides, near the feet. A skull diadem is set into the middle of her untied hair. Further, a cobra is seen on the left side of the goddess. Vaiṣṇavī is two-handed and carries a child on the left hip (*Pl.* 63). No *āyudha* is represented. Garuḍa in the human form is portrayed near the right leg of the goddess. Kaumārī standing next to Vaiṣṇavī also holds a child in a similar manner (*Pl.* 63). She has very distinct *śikhaṇḍaka* type of hair style and her peacock *vāhana* is trailing behind her. Brahmāṇī holds a child with the lower hand and a lotus in the upper right hand (*Pl.* 62). Her upper left hand is caressing the *haṁsa* on the left side. The four-handed Śiva holds a *vīṇā* in the lower hands, and a *triśūla* and a snake in the upper right and left hands (*Pl.* 62). The *vāhana,* bull, stands at the back of the god.

All the goddesses and Śiva stand in *tribhaṅga*. Each figure is separated from the other with pilasters. The complexity of the composition is enhanced by the rhythmic contours of the *uttarīya* spread across their bodies. Considering the iconographical peculiarities the sculpture could be dated to the second quarter of sixth century AD.[85]

Iconographical Summary

The Saptamātṛkā icons originate in central India during early fifth century AD and exemplify two distinct typologies; the one with *āyudhas* encode militancy, whereas the other denote motherly aspect. The examples from Udayagiri, Badoh-Pathari and Besnagar exemplify the early distinctive approaches. In the subsequent developments these are conflated and the icons from then onwards goes through different assimilatory experiments. By the early sixth century, a certain iconographic standardization sets in as evidenced from the Rajghati and Naharghati panels at Deogarh. The Mātṛkā icons from Naharghati, Nand-Chand and Amanwa exemplify different experimentations and incorporation of various fresh iconographical features.

At the early stage of evolution, generally the individual personalities of the goddesses are incipient, and the group characteristics are more pronounced. The primary aspect in them is the group association, counted in heptads. Hypothetically, in Besnagar and in the early phase in western India the individuality of the particular goddess is signified on the basis of their positionality in the group; that is the particular order in which they were installed. As a collectivity, the development of their distinctive personalities are a matter of elaboration, which also explains the motivation behind experimentations.

Śiva is an important component in the Mātṛkā iconography from the very early stage. Skanda only has a secondary significance in the iconographical schema, whose place is only as a son of Śiva. In fact, soon his position is replaced by Gaṇeśa, for more valid reasons. Since Mātṛkā icons are not illustrations of literary narrative, and they were made for the ritualistic worship, the association of Gaṇeśa may have been for aiding their primary function as icons. Significantly, at Udayagiri though Gaṇeśa images are found in the vicinity of Mātṛkās, it is found in more close proximity to the images of Durgā, which suggest a ritualistic connection between the two. The absorption of Gaṇeśa into Mātṛkās groups occur only by early sixth century AD, suggesting a shift in the ritualistic import.

In the early stage *vāhana*s were not an essential component in the Mātṛkā iconography. In the Rajghati images the *vāhana*s appear for the first time with the Mātṛkās, though they are not very pronounced compositionally. In the middle of sixth century AD at Muṇḍeśvarī and Nand-Chand (group-A), they assume very prominent position. The goddesses in these are even represented as being mounted on the animals naturalistically.

Brahmāṇī receives additional two heads right in the early stage at Ravulaphadi cave in Deccan. In the Rajghati Mātṛkā group Vārāhī has only human head, which in Naharghati is further supplemented by a boar face. It is to be noted that during the early period Mātṛkās are largely two-handed. Significantly Cāmuṇḍā is the goddess who receives the four hands in the early phase, at Rajghati. It is so, perhaps, because she is the only Devī *śakti* among the Mātṛkās.

Though not very pronounced the *āyudha*s are present right at the early stage of iconography. Apart from the specific identity they endow, the meaning of militancy of the Mātṛkās are also encoded in such instances. Later the *āyudhapuruṣa* appear in two groups, namely from Muṇḍeśvarī and Nand-Chand (group-A). The experimentation, however does not persist for too long. The *vajra,* in the hands of Aindrī from Amanwa is large and prominent. Considering the point of defining the identity of independent goddess in the group, certain other features, such as the *mṛgacarma* on Brahmāṇī, and a third eye (or, alternatively with many eyes on the body, as in the Amanwa image) of Aindrī are significant.

In western India, the early examples from Devnimori, Vartol, Samalaji (group-A) and Tanesara, illustrate an emerging iconography, wherein particularities of the distinct personalities of the goddesses are only minimally suggested. In the transitional phase more distinctive approach in terms of the use of *āyudha*s and *vāhana*s have been noticed. The Mātṛkā sculptures from Jagat and Samalaji (group-B) are examples of this stage. In the beginning of this phase the portrayal of *āyudha*s and *vāhana*s hardly occur together. The accompanying figures are also highly flexible during this period. But during this period the shift from Skanda to Gaṇeśa can be noticed. (Compare the examples from Samalaji group-B (*Pl.* 61) and Tintoi (*Pl.* 64). Later Gaṇeśa is accepted universally instead of Skanda.

The most significant iconographical incorporation in the Saptamātṛkā iconography in the early phase in Deccan is the inclusion of Kālabhairava among the Mātṛkās, evident in Aihole and Elephanta. In terms of iconographic conception Cāmuṇḍā and Kālabhairava have similarities, for they symbolize the *tāmasika* aspect, within the Tāntric mode. Soundara Rajan mentions that the inclusion of Bhairava is in accordance with the Āgamic injunctions.[86] In Elephanta and Ravulaphadi caves these deities however have a distinct visual conception.

Iconographically the inclusion of Śiva along with Mātṛkās is seen from fifth century AD onwards, which is attested by the Purāṇic description. In the example from Ravulaphadi, in Aihole we observe that Śiva occupies a central position among the Mātṛkās. The presence of Śiva is further enhanced by his Kālabhairava form along with Mātṛkās. Another such example is at Elephanta.

The iconographical evolution of the independent goddesses is also of great significance in the western Indian tradition. Such a development can be traced in the case of Cāmuṇḍā. In the early stage Cāmuṇḍā is not differentiated. Yet, in the sculptures from Tanesara and Samalaji (group-A), she is only generally uncouth and ugly. An ascetic aspect is stressed in these examples. In the transitional phase, her icons from Tintoi and Samalaji (group-B) present her in a modified manner. At this stage she assumes a more beautiful form, yet her malevolence is suggested in an unusual manner by the presence of fangs or the dishevelled hair. In the phase to follow, probably due to the sudden inflow of new ideas, she assumes the more widely known personality of emaciated form and horrifying expression. She is literally *ugrarūpiṇī* in these later sculptures.

One of the most important aspects of the western Indian Mātṛkā iconography in the early and transitional phase is their association with Skanda. The identification of some of the Mātṛkā groups as those of Kṛttikās is interpreted as the base for this association. R.C. Agrawala and Pratapaditya Pal have considered the early problematic Mātṛkā groups as representing Kṛttikās.[87] Further, Sara Schastok considers the possibility that the Kṛttikā/Saptamātṛkā distinction as being "deliberately combined into one at Samalaji for the purpose of declaring the identity or interchangeability of these two heptads".[88] This proposition is further elucidated upon with the evidences like the presence of Skanda and Svāhā or Āgneyī among the different Mātṛkā groups. The conclusion of Schastok, that the Samalaji Mātṛkās as primarily related to the *Mahābhārata* myth of the birth of Skanda, in which Kṛttikās are considered as his mothers and that they have only a secondary connection with the Saptamātṛkā concept,[89] are questionable propositions. On the contrary they must be identified as belonging to a transitional phase of Saptamātṛkā iconography, in which the representation is in a state of flux and in the process of getting standardized. The presence of Skanda or Āgneyī cannot be taken as a pointer for them being Kṛttikās. In fact there is no specific iconographical feature in any of these goddess which would enable this identification. It may be remembered that in the earliest representations of a group of seven female figures, hailing from Dhangaon (Mathura) of Kuṣāṇa period, (*Pl.* 16) they are specifically accompanied by the attribute of the water vessels denoting their ascetic connection. No such evidences are present in the sculptures under discussion. It may be noticed that in the transitional phase of Mātṛkā iconography, Skanda and Ganeśa are alternative attending male gods. In the early phase of Madhyadeśa examples, such as Badoh-Pathari, both the gods do not accompany Mātṛkās. Moreover by fifth-sixth centuries Skanda is fully absorbed into the *Śaiva* pantheon, as the son of Śiva and Pārvatī, replacing his older, Agni, Kṛttikā, Gaṅgā associations. Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhavam* is the best example of this shift. The association of Skanda with Saptamātṛkās is seen along with Gaṇeśa and Śiva in the examples from Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole and at Elephanta. In the former instances at least both Gaṇeśa and Skanda are present simultaneously, along with Mātṛkās as the sons of Śiva. One may infer the continuation of earlier Kuṣāṇa period association of Skanda with Kṛttikā therein, but that is only insubstantial to prove the seven goddesses as Kṛttikās. They are primarily the Purāṇic Saptamātṛkās. Similarly, the inclusion of Āgneyī among the Western Indian Mātṛkās, seen even in the medieval examples,[90] cannot be a pointer towards the association with the *Mahābhārata* story of Svāhā impersonating as the wives of seven sages, but is to be understood as a regional peculiarity in the Mātṛkā iconography. Similar incorporations, like that of Kauberī, is to be considered as a common phenomenon in the medieval period. In the enlarging Mātṛkā iconography, images of Vāyavī and Vināyakī are also noticed, among some of the later Mātṛkā groups.

References

1. Katherine Anne Harper, *Seven Hindu Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation : The Iconography of Saptamatrkas*, Wales, 1989.
2. (a) U.P. Shah, "Some Early sculptures from Abu and Bhinmal", in *BBMPG,* XII, 1955, pp. 43-65.

   (b) "Sculptures from Samalaji and Roda", in *BBMPG,* XIII, Special Issue, 1960.

   (c) "Western Indian Sculpture and the So-called Gupta Influences", in *Aspects of Indian Art,* ed. by Pratapaditya Pal, Leiden, 1972, pp. 44-48.
3. *Ibid.*, 1972, p. 47.
4. (a) R.N. Mehta and S.N. Chowdhari, *Excavations at Devnimori,* Baroda, 1966. Mehta and Chowdhari has assigned the date *ca.* AD 375 for the Devnimori sculptures, on the basis of an inscribed relic casket found within the *stūpa*.

   (b) Joanna G. Williams, *The Art of Gupta India,* New Jersey, 1982, p. 59, dates Devnimori sculptures to *ca.* AD 400 to 415. She interprets the sculptural style as an "early example of styles developed in Mathura that mingled with local tradition rather than as a Kṣatrapa prototype for a Gupta style". The details of the discussions regarding the dating and the stylistic interpretations of Devnimori sculptures are not relevant to the present study.
5. (a) R.C. Agrawala, "Some Unpublished Sculptures from South-Western Rajasthan", in

LK, 6, 1959, pp. 63-71.
(b) "Some More Unpublished Sculptures from Rajasthan", in *LK*, 10, 1961, pp. 175-84.
(c) "More Sculptures from Amjhara, Rajasthan", in *AA*, XII, 1965, p. 186-88.
(d) "Kṛttikā Cult in Early Indian Sculptures", in *LK,* 14, 1969, pp. 56-57.
(e) "Mother and Child Sculptures from Samalaji and Rajasthan", in *BBMPG,* Vol. XXIII, 1971, pp. 101-17.

6. Sara L. Schastok, *The Samalaji Sculptures and 6th Century Art in Western India,* Leiden, 1985.
7. *Ibid*., pp. 6-12.
8. *Ibid*., p. 7.
9. N.P. Joshi, *Catalogue of the Brāhmanical Sculptures in the State Museum*, Part I, Lucknow, 1972, p. 123.
10. R.C. Agrawala, "Mother and Child Sculptures from Samalaji and Rajasthan", in *BBMPG*, Vol. XXIII, 1971, p. 194. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.*, 1960, p. 50.
11. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,* Vol. III, pp. 34-36.
12. Alexander Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes,* Varanasi, 1966, p. 96; had published it first, and then later Fleet has republished the inscription, but has been misidentified the caves as dedicated to Sūrya and Viṣṇu respectively.
13. D.R. Patil, *Monuments of Udayagiri Hills,* Gwalior, 1948, p. 12.
14. K. Harper provides a more detailed description of these, ***see*** K. Harper, 1989, pp. 75-79.
15. *Annual Report of the Archaeological Department,* Gwalior State, for Samvat 1982, year 1925-26, p. 12.
16. *Ibid.*
17. N.P. Joshi, *Mātṛkās — Mothers in Kuṣāṇa Art,* New Delhi, 1986, p. 86.
18. Close proximity in time between Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkās and the early fifth century AD sculptures is considered to be the reason for such usages.
19. R.C. Agrawala, "Mātṛkā Relief in Early Indian Art", in *EW*, Vol. 21, No. 1-2 (March-June) 1971, p. 84.
20. N. P. Joshi, *op.cit.,* 1986, p. 82.
21. R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1971.
22. Michael Meister, "Regional Variations in Mātṛkā Conventions", in *ABA*, 47, no. 3/4, p. 239.
23. K. Harper, *op.cit*., 1989, p. 80.
24. J.C. Harle, *Gupta Sculpture*, Oxford, 1974, p. 13.
25. Joanna G. Williams, *The Art of Gupta India,* New Jersey, 1982, Fig. 48, p. 51.
26. J.C. Harle, *op.cit.*, 1974, p. 40, suggests a broad time bracket, that is first half of fifth century AD.
27. S.R. Thakore, *Catalogue of the Sculptures in the Archaeological Museum,* Gwalior, undated.
28. J.C. Harle, *op.cit.,* 1974, p. 40.
29. (a) Dr. D.R. Patil, "Sapta Mātṛkās from Besnagar", in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Cuttack, 1949.
(b) R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1971.

30. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1960. Fig. 24, p. 121 mentions that this sculpture was discovered by V.L. Devkar and as having close similarity in posture with the Kuṣāṇa images of Sūrya, Sarasvatī and Viṣṇu from Katra mount.
31. (a) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1971, p. 46, maintains that the Buddha images from Devnimori derive its stylistic features from Gandhara and as "free from any influence of the so-called Gupta art".

    (b) Joanna G. Williams, *op.cit.,* 1982, p. 59 interprets Devnimori as an early example of styles developed in Mathura that mingled with local traditions. The author ascribes the 'late Gupta' denomination (from early 6th to 7th century AD) for the sculptures of Samalaji and related sites (pp. 143-44). The basis of this assessment is by comparing sculptures from nearby site like Mandsor and Sondhni. However, the scholar does not give due attention to the local peculiarities of Samalaji sculptures and simply points out that the late-Gupta was turned into "something more distinctively local".
32. (a) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1960, p. 48, Figs. 27, 28 discusses only two sculptures from the group.

    (b) R.N. Mehta, "Five sculptures from Devnimori", in *JISOA,* New Series, 1966, pp.27,29, plate XX-1-4, describes four relatively better preserved figures and also a torso and a head all belonging to one single group. The broken head is highly worn-out, but the torso of the Mātṛkā with breasts, necklace and the left hand bend upward is mentioned as resembling the above-mentioned better preserved images.
33. R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1971, p. 10.
34. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, p. 72. Figs.17 and 18, also dates the sculptures to *ca.* AD 535 which appears to be unlikely on the basis of stylistic considerations.
35. (a) U.P. Shaḥ, *op.cit.,* 1960. Fig. 42 mentions that the sculpture hails from Samalaji.

    (b) R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1971, Fig. 14, also maintain the same.

    (c) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* Fig. 49, p. 11, mentions that according to Baroda Museum registers the sculptures hails from Vartol, twelve miles north-west in a direct line from Samalaji.
36. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985. Fig. 50, p. 11.
37. U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1960, p. 62.
38. *Ibid.*
39. (a) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, p. 11, has also grouped the figures similarly on the basis of their approximately comparable dimensions.

    (b) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1960, p. 65, has also proposed a Mātṛkā group having six figures. He includes two male figures along with the four figures under consideration. They are one figure from Vartol discussed above and a Cāmuṇḍā of small dimension hailing from Devnimori (Sara L. Schastok, 1985, fig. 19).
40. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.* 1985, p. 11.
41. (a) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* p. 121, suggests an early Gupta or probably late-Kṣatrapa date (i.e., late 4th or early 5th century AD).

    (b) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, Figs. 13 to 16, assigns *ca.* AD 525-30, as the date for this group.
42. R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1959, p. 67.
43. R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, 1961, *Pls.* XXI-XXII, Figs. 10-19 and p. 33, Fig. A.
44. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, p. 83. Provides the measurement of the seven figures out

of the total twelve figures (including the male figures). The author points out significant variation between the figures and hence confesses the inability in grouping the figures on this basis. However, the author does not mention whether or not the given height is inclusive of the pedestal heights, wherever they are present.

45. R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1961, Fig. 18.
46. *Ibid.,* Fig. 17, identified the figure as Yakṣa(?).
47. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, p. 83, opines that the figure may be of Śiva, similar to the Samalaji Śiva (of group-C)
48. *Ibid.,* p. 14. "The elimination of any incised lines on the garment suggests that the Tanesara images, like the Amjhara and Jagat ones are later than Samalaji by a few years".
49. Pratapaditya Pal, "Some Rajasthani Sculptures of the Gupta period", in *BAMAM*, Oberlin College, XXVIII/2, 1971, p. 115.
50. (a) R.C. Agrawala, "Kṛttika cult in Early Indian Art", in *LK*, 14, 1969, pp. 56-57.

    (b) Pratapaditya Pal, *op.cit.,* 1971, p. 111.

    (c) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, pp. 83-84.
51. Sara L. Schastok, *ibid.*, and Pratapaditya Pal, *op.cit.,* describes the figure as pregnant. This is unlikely.
52. Pratapaditya Pal, *op.cit.*, p. 110.
53. R. Nagaswamy, *Tāntric Cult of South India, Delhi,* 1982, Figs. 46, 47, 48, 49, etc.
54. (A) Walter Spink M., "The Great Cave at Elephanta : A Study of Sources", in *Essays on Gupta Culture,* ed. by Bardwell Smith, Delhi, 1982, pp. 238-42, dates from *ca.* AD 535 to 550.

    (B) Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Siva,* Princeton, 1981, p. 443, has accepted Spink's mid-sixth century date.

    (C) Ratan Parimoo, *Elephanta in the Context of Evolution and Significance of Śaiva Sculpture,* A guide to Elephanta, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 64-66.

    (D) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit,* 1985, pp. 43-44.
55. Opinions differ widely among the scholars regarding the dating of this cave,

    (a) K.V. Soundara Rajan, *Cave Temples of Deccan,* New Delhi, 1981, p. 9, ascribes *ca.* AD 650 to 670.

    (b) K.V. Ramesh, *Chālukyas of Vatāpi,* Delhi, 1984, p. 72, on the basis of epigraphical as well on the circumstantial evidences dates the cave to the time of Cālukyan king Maṅgaleśa, which is between AD 591 to 610.

    (c) Gary Tarr, "Chronology and Development of Chalukyan Cave Temples", in *AO*, VIII, 1970, p. 175, dates the cave to *ca.* AD. 550s mentions that this cave is probably the earliest fully developed temple of the series, and it is probably the oldest surviving major temple of both the Cālukyan dynasty and of the Cālukyan region.
56. (a) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.*, 1960, pp. 72-73, has first noticed the relationship between the Parel Śiva stele and the Samalaji sculptures in general. Particularly, he point out the affinity between the Samalaji Viśvarūpa and Parel Śiva in terms of style and the use of emanatory concept.

    (b) Sadashiv Gorakshkar, (i) "A Harihara Image Recovered from Jogesvari and the problem of dating Gharapuri (Elephanta)", in *Madhu : Recent Researches in Indian Archaeology and Art History,* Shri M. N. Deshpande Festschiff, ed. by M.S. Nagaraja

Rao, Delhi, 1981, pp. 254-55. (ii) "The Parel Mahādeva Reassessed and the Newly Discovered Images from Parel", in *LK,* 20, 1982, pp. 15-24. the scholar establishes the existence of Shivadi workshop on the basis of a small group of sculptures in the Bombay area.

(c) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, pp. 50-54. Establishes the imported stylistic conventions of Shivadi group from Samalaji, in terms of the use of the central loop of cloth tying the *dhotī* and other stylistic comparisons. The Shivadi sculptures are considered to be just prior to the sculptures at Cave I. The scholar goes into the elaborate discussion of the question of relative dating of Shivadi group, Samalaji and Elephanta Cave I sculptures.

57. K.V Soundara Rajan had mentioned this possibility in a personal discussion. I am unable to confirm this identification with relevant references.

58. Michael Meister, has suggested that the last two figures from a pair, implying a more developed notion of Devī among the Mātṛkās in comparison to Samalaji Saptamātṛkās. (Ref. "Regional Variations iǹ Mātṛkā Conventions", in *PWMB*, in Moti Chandra Commemoration Volume (in press), as referred by Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, pp. 55 and 86.

59. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, pp. 86-87, further elaborates the hypothesis by the analysis of Mātṛkās in conjunction with Skanda at Jogesvari (which has a badly worn-out remains of a Mātṛkā group along with the images of Durgā, Gaṇeśa and Skanda) and at Ellora Cave No. 21. The point the scholar makes is that, in both these caves Skanda is flanked by Naigameya and ram-headed Agni which refers to the story of Skanda's birth, whereas the Elephanta example do not show this trait. "The Elephanta panel is a statement about the nature of Skanda as Śiva, reflecting newer ideas, the Jogesvari panel seem to reach back to an earlier era in reiterating the circumstances of Skanda's birth". It can be agreed upon that the Jogesvari and Ellora Cave No. 21 example of Skanda possibly suggest the birth and parentage of Skanda. However, it may be noted that there is no specific aspect present in the iconography of Elephanta Skanda image which can prove his identification with Śiva. Further if we accept the possibility that the first figure in the Mātṛkā group as that of Śiva, there is no need for such a painstaking analysis.

60. K.V. Ramesh, *op.cit.,* on the basis of the inscription near to Naṭarāja, which is the second name of Maṅgaleśa, interprets the image as deified portrait of Maṅgaleśa. This possibility, however is unconvincing.

61. R.S. Gupte, *The Art and Architecture of Aihole,* Bombay 1967, p. 108, identifies the figure as Vaiṣṇavī on the basis of her high *kirīṭamukuṭa* and the figure next on the right of Śiva as Kaumārī.

62. Gray Tar, *op.cit.,* 1970, p. 174, identifies the figure as that of Bhṛṅgī. Such a possibility cannot be ruled out totally. Yet, note the placement of the figure among Mātṛkās, and not near to Śiva.

63. R.S. Gupte, *op.cit.,* 1967, p. 110.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Michael Meister, "Regional variations in Mātṛkā Conventions", *op.cit.,* also suggest the identifications of the goddess as Pārvatī. As referred to by Carol R. Bolon, "A Late 8th Century Mātṛkā Set at Aihole", in *Dimensions of Indian Art*, Pupul Jayakar Seventy, ed. by Lokesh Chandra and Jyotindra Jain, Delhi, 1986, p. 54 and footnotes.

66. Daya Ram Sahni and Rai Bahadur, "Deogarh Rock Inscription of Svamibhata", in *EI*,

(January-October,1925-26) Vol. XVIII, pp. 125-27. Offers a cursory description of Naharghati panel.

67. (a) Joanna Williams; *op.cit.,* 1982, p. 136, ascribes the date as *ca.* AD 550, while in the list of plates gives the date as *ca.* AD 500.

(b) R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit*, 1971, p. 85, ascribed the date as sixth century AD.

68. Joanna Williams, *op.cit.,* 1982, p. 136, wrongly mentions that the images are without vehicles.

69. D.R. Sahani and R. Bahadur, *op.cit.*, 1925-26, pp. 26-27.

70. *EI*, Vol. 18, January-October, 1925-26, p. 125. A rather cursory descriptions of the images are provided, in which Maheśvarī is mentioned as holding Gaṇeśa in her left hand. As the figure of the child is badly damaged, it is difficult to confirm whether the figure is that of Gaṇeśa.

71. N.P. Joshi, *op.cit.,* p. 87.

72. Donald M. Stadtner, "The Sankaragana Panel in the Sagar University Art Museum", in *Indian Epigraphy — Its Bearing on the History of Art,* ed. by Frederick M. Asher and G.S. Gai, New Delhi, 1985, p. 166.

73. (a) R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* Fig. 25, identifies the figure as Maheśvarī.

(b) K.D. Bajpai, *Sagar — Through the Ages,* Sagar, 1964. Plate 7, p. 43, Identifies the figure as that of Pārvatī along with Skanda. The sculpture, then was housed in the Artillery mess at Sagar.

74. (a) R.C. Agrawala, *ibid.,* Fig. 26. The scholar identifies the figure as Ardhanārīśvara and as hailing from Gopalganj. The sculpture represents Vīṇādhara Śiva and not Ardhanārīśvara. The broken part of the left side of the chest was part of the one end of the *vīṇā* (*tumbā*).

(b) K.D. Bajpai, *op.cit.*, 1964, Plate 6, p. 43, identifies the figure as Ardhanārīśvara and mentions that 'those figures are said to have been brought from some ancient temple near about'. The same author, in *Marg*, Vol. XXVI, June, 1973, No. 3, Pl. 16 (Madhya Pradesh Sculptures Through the Ages) maintains the identification of the figure as Ardhanārīśvara.

75. Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India, 300 to 800 AD*, Delhi, 1980, p. 41, mentions that Mātṛkās may have been associated with the seated Gaṇeśa, which is almost precisely the same size as Mātṛkās. The Mātṛkās are preserved in the Patna Museum, and the Gaṇeśa according to Asher remains just below the summit of Muṇḍeśvarī hill. However, he mentions only two Mātṛkās, and doubts whether they belong to the same group, as their pedestals are unidentical. This need not be a major point of dissimilarity. On stylistic considerations all the three images belong to one group.

76. Citta Ranjan Prasad Sinha, *Early Sculpture of Bihar,* Patna, 1980, p. 77. He has ascribed these images to Kuṣāṇa period, but such an early date cannot be justified. Asher, *op.cit.*, 1980, p. 41, on the basis of similarity between Mātṛkās from Besnagar is tempted to assign it to fifth century AD, but says that the form of Maheśvarī's pedestal is too complex for this date and hence assigns sixth century or early seventh century AD.

77. Frederick M. Asher, *ibid.,* pp. 44-45, discusses that, Aindrī's broad form corresponds closely to the sculptures of Gaya District as does the face, which recall some of those that appear on the Bodh Gaya railing. "The heavy set quality in Shahabad district as the sculpture's province, for there the sculptors drew inspiration from the art of Varanasi and its environs, including Sarnath. Hence little resemblance may be seen, when this

Aindrī is compared with contemporary works from Shahabad district, such as the Mātṛkās from Muṇḍeśvarī". Further, the land grant inscription with a date corresponding to AD 551-52 hailing from Amanwa, points out the importance of the place during the mid-sixth century AD. However, considering the iconographical development the figure may be dated slightly later than mid-sixth century AD.

78. *Devī-Māhātmya*, 8.33, "... wherever she moved, made the enemies bereft of valour and prowess by sprinkling on them the water from her *kamaṇḍalu*.

79. R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1959, *Pl.* XVIII, Figs. 4, 5,6.

80. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, Fig. 53.

81. (a) Inamdar P.A., *Some Archaeological Finds in the Idar State, Himmatnagar,* 1936, p. 11, Fig. 6, for the first time identified the image of Cāmuṇḍā as that of Pārvatī as a Bhīl woman.

    (b) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1960, pp. 121-22. ***See also***, p. 52 and footnotes, continued the identification of earlier scholar as Pārvatī as a Bhīl lady. The image of Brahmāṇī was identified as Kaumārī.

82. (a) U.P. Shah, *ibid.*, Figs. 25, 26 and 47, did not explore the possibility of grouping them together.

    (b) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985. Figs. 1, 2 and 3 identifies these figures as belonging to one group, which she considers as the earliest among the Samalaji Mātṛkās, dated to *ca.* AD 520.

83. (a) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1960, Figs. 52, 53 p. 126.

    (b) R.C. Agrawala, *op.cit.,* 1971, *Pl.* LIX, 9 and 10, p. 103.

84. The identification of these figures as Cāmuṇḍā and Brahmāṇī is also suggested by Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, pp. 74 and 85, Figs. 51 and 52.

85. (a) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.,* 1960, p. 126. While Cāmuṇḍā fragment is dated to sixth century, the Brahmānī panel is dated to early seventh century AD.

    (b) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, *Pls.* 51 & 52 ascribes *ca.* AD 550 date for the sculpture.

86. K.V. Soundara Rajan, "A Magnificent Sapta Mātṛkā Group and Parvati form Vadaval", in *Glimpses of Indian Culture, Architecture, Art and Religion*, Delhi, 1981, p. 223. (The article originally co-authored with R.T. Parikh, published in *PWMB*, No. 7, 1959-62.

87. (a) R.C. Agrawala, "Mātṛkā Reliefs in Early Indian Art", in *EW*, XXI, 1-2, 1971, pp. 79-89.

    (b) *Op.cit.,* 1969, 79-89.

    (c) *Op.cit.,* 1961, *LK* No. 10.

    (d) Pratapaditya Pal, "Some Rajasthani sculptures of the Gupta period", in *BAMAM*, Oberlin College XXVIII/2, 1971, pp. 105-18.

    (e) It was Dr. Patil who for the first time suggested the idea of *Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnī*s (Kṛttikās) while studying Besnagar, Mātṛkās. Ref. : D.R. Patil, Sapta Mātṛkā from Besnagar, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress session,* Cuttack, 1949, pp. 109-12.

88. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, p. 72.

89. *Ibid.,* p. 79.

90. Maruti Nandan Tiwari and Kamal Giri, "A note on the Mātṛkā figures from the E.M.E. Dakṣiṇā Mūrti Temple, Baroda", in *Saṁbodhi,* L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, Vol. II, April, 1982, Jan. 1983, No. 1-4, p. 54.

5

Saptamātṛkā Icons-II

(mid-sixth to late seventh centuries AD)

IN the previous chapter the early phase of Mātṛkā iconography has been discussed, wherein the two distinct typologies (one laying stress upon the motherly aspect and the other militancy) and their conflations in central India, western India and Deccan has been analyzed. The present chapter deals with the developments in Mātṛkā iconography after this initial stage, till about late seventh century AD.

The Transitions and the Two Modes of Presentations : Western India

The innovations in the modes of visualization and meanings which mark the shift in the early phase of iconography of Mātṛkās in western India (discussed in the previous chapter) with the exemplary images of Jagat, Tintoi and Samalaji (group-B), lead itself to greater complexities during the period under consideration. By mid-sixth century the conflation of the motherly and the militant aspects in the icons have been nearly complete, and this standard mode of representational schema awaited elaborations in the hands of sculptors, which is the primary concern in this section.

By about mid-sixth century *āyudha*s and *vāhana*s together are employed in defining the particular personalities of the goddesses, which now become essential components in the iconography. Along with these, the motif of child, though a variable, completed the iconographical schema.

The early phase of Mātṛkās from western India exemplify only the standing type of images. This, as pointed out in the previous chapter, is distinct from the seated mode favoured in central India observed from the early examples. By about the second half of sixth century seated mode of images are innovated in western India. This image type has been particularly favoured in the border region of Gujarat and Rajasthan. This can be interpreted as an influence from central India or as a local innovation is a question to consider. As such, even while the seated mode of visualization become accepted as a valid alternative, the earlier standing type persists in western India, which lend itself to possibilities and further variations, including that of the dancing type.

Among the standing image type of mid sixth century Mātṛkā sculptures is the third group from Samalaji (group-C),which preserve six goddesses and the images of Śiva and Gaṇeśa (*Pls.* 65 to 69 & 72).[1] The six goddesses include, Maheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Vāyavī(?), Aindrī and Cāmuṇḍā. Except the figures of Cāmuṇḍā, Śiva and Gaṇeśa, the rest of the figures are preserved only partially. In the mutilated images, the animal *vāhanas* are the only component in the iconography that is very clearly discernible. Represented behind the legs, they are conspicuously large, occupying almost the whole length of the pedestal. The bull vehicle enables the identification of Maheśvarī. (*Pl.* 65) The fragments of a child can be observed on the left hip of the goddess. Vaiṣṇavī's vehicle, Garuḍa is composite in form, with the body of a bird which probably had a human head, now broken off. Aindrī and Vāyavī have elephant and ram as their vehicles (*Pls.* 67 and 72).

The emaciated four-armed Cāmuṇḍā holds a trident in the upper right hand and the handle of a broken sword is visible in the lower right hand (*Pl.* 68). The lower left and upper left hands hold a skull cup and a severed head respectively. She also carries a *śakti* between her folded normal left hand. The breasts of the goddess are pendulous, she is crowned with *jaṭājūṭa*, and wears a *muṇḍamālā*. Tiger skin is her lower garment. The broken parts of a coiling snake are seen on the right side, between the breast and the arm. She has what looks like a lioness as her vehicle. The four-armed Śiva holds an *akṣamālā*, a *triśūla* and a snake in the lower right, upper right and upper left hands (*Pl.* 69). The lower left hand is in *katyāvalaṁbita* position. He has *jaṭājūṭa*, the third eye and the *ūrdhvaretas*. Over the usual *dhotī* he is also adorned with a tiger skin. The bull vehicle stands behind. The right hand of the two-handed Gaṇeśa is broken off and the left hand rests on the shoulder of a *gaṇa*. A cobra emerges between the chest and the right hand. Apart from the stylistic consideration, the changed iconography of Cāmuṇḍā, indicate a date not earlier than mid-sixth century AD.[2]

Compositionally close to the these Samalaji images is the solitary image of Aindrī from Dungarpur (*Pl.* 70), which originally might have belonged to a complete Saptamātṛkā group, now lost.[3] The close similarity with the Samalaji sculptures however do not indicate that the work was done by the same guild, since, stylistically the Dungarpur image suggests a greater closeness to the Gupta idiom, related to the Tanesara images discussed in the previous chapter. A wide diffusion of this particular type of standing Mātṛkās, outside Samalaji can be suggested, which is also supported by similar examples found at Amjhara.

Two separate groups of Mātṛkās hail from Amjhara. Probably, the standing images are slightly earlier (group-A) than the seated ones (group-B). However, the three Mātṛkās and *vīṇādhara* Śiva of the group-A are highly mutilated. The fragmentary lower portion of the figure (*Pl.* 71) with a bird behind the legs is similar to the Samalaji Brahmāṇī of group-B (*Pl.* 59). Sara Schastok identifies the Amjhara fragment as Kaumārī.[4] The image of Cāmuṇḍā from this group is relatively well preserved (*Pl.* 73). Compositionally, the four-handed emaciated figure is similar to the Samalaji Cāmuṇḍā of group-C, discussed above (*Pl.* 68). She holds a severed head and a skull cup in the lower and upper left hands. The other hands are broken. The *muṇḍamālā* and the *jaṭājūṭa* are also comparable to the Cāmuṇḍā of Samalaji.[5] Considering the mutilations the possibility of stylistic comparisons are rather limited, yet can be seen as having compositional and craftsmanly similarity close to the works of both Samalaji and Dungarpur guilds. Relatively, it can also noticed that this group of images of Amjhara are also rather crude in comparison to the later seated images of Mātṛkās of the same site and the other comparable examples discussed above.

The seated type of Mātṛkās appear to have been innovated by the Samalaji guild working at Amjhara. Alternatively, it could also have been simultaneously adopted at Samalaji or, in fact could be slightly later, since the iconography of the Samalaji seated group shows iconographical elaborations, presumably suggesting a later date. Interestingly, the images from Samalaji of this type stylistically relates to the earlier sculptures of Rajasthan (i.e., Dungarpur, Tanesara and Amjhara group-B), which would suggest the migration of guilds between these sites.

The seated Mātṛkās of Amjhara (group-B), apart from the images of seven goddesses, includes *vīṇādhara* Śiva and Gaṇeśa. The two-handed Brahmāṇī[6] (*Pl.* 75) is seated in *pralambapādāsana* in an upright posture, similar to the contemporary *viśvarūpa* Viṣṇu images of Samalaji.[7] Apart from the same quality in the forms, similarity in the folds of the *dhotī* and the 'U'-shape of the central loop falling from the waist band is identical in these sculptures. A *haṁsa* attends on the left side of her feet. The right hand is broken off and the object held in the left hand is badly mutilated. On the left shoulder the *mṛgacarma* is delineated, which finds textual support in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*. The *jaṭājūṭa* is a further evidence for the identification of the figure as Brahmāṇi and is close to the image of Samalaji Brahmāṇī (group-B, *Pl.* 59). Kaumārī is seated on a decorated stool with a naturalistically bent body turned to the side and the legs harmoniously composed (*Pl.* 76). The partially broken peacock vehicle stands in the front of the legs of the figure. Both the hands are broken. The two-handed Vaiṣṇavī (*Pl.* 74) is seated in *lalitāsana* on a hybrid Garuḍa, presumably identical to the Samalaji example (group-C), since the latter is partially mutilated. In the left hand is a child, only part of which is preserved. Probably, the object held in the right hand is a lotus. Only the lower portion of the Vārāhī image preserved. The *vāhana* of the goddess is a boar which is similar to the Samalaji example (group-C, *Pl.* 66).[8] The images of Maheśvarī, Vāyavī(?) (*Pl.* 77), and Aindrī, likewise are preserved only below the waist. These goddesses are depicted in *lalitāsana* on their respective vehicles. The four-handed *vīṇādhara* Śiva is seated on Nandī in *lalitāsana* (*Pl.* 78). Iconographically, the image is comparable to the images of the deity from central Indian sites, such as Rajghati (Deogarh), Nand-Chand (group-A), discussed in the previous chapter. On the basis of stylistic closeness to the Samalaji Mātṛkās of group-B, the Amjhara group-B sculptures could be dated to the mid-sixth century AD.[9]

The two Mātṛkās — Brahmāṇī and Kaumārī of the fourth group from Samalaji (group-D), unlike the earlier images from the site are visualized in seated position (*Pls.* 79 & 80). An image of *vīṇādhara* Śiva also belongs to this group. The sitting posture of Kaumārī is similar to that of the Kaumārī from Amjhara group-B (*Pl.* 76), yet, disproportionate, and qualitatively inferior.

Iconographically, one significant deviation from the earlier convention is the three-headed Brahmāṇī, which, for the first time we notice in this group, in the region of western India (*Pl.* 80). Brahmāṇī holds an *akṣamālā* in the lower right hand, which is the only hand remaining intact. Further, this is an early instance of Kaumārī depicted with four-hands (*Pl.* 79). She has a *śakti* in the lower right and a staff in the upper right hands, the rest of the hands are not preserved. The peacock and swan vehicles of Kaumārī and Brahmāṇī are quite similar to each other, however the identification of the goddesses need not confuse us considering the other distinct symbols of identity. While Śiva and Brahmāṇī have *jaṭājūṭa*, Kaumārī is attired with *śikhaṇḍaka* type of hair. The four-handed Śiva is depicted as playing *vīṇā* and is seated on a bull. Considering the evolved post-Gupta stylistic idiom deriving from the southern Rajasthan and due to the elaborations in the iconographic features this group can be dated to the third quarter of sixth century AD.

In terms of compositional and stylistic closeness to Amjhara (group-B) and Samalaji (group-D) Mātṛkās, and similarly, indicating a anticipatory trend is the group of Mātṛkās from Mataria (north Gujarat) (*Pls.* 81 to 86). However, it is difficult to determine whether these images were carved before or after the Kotesvar images (*Pls.* 89 to 93). Considered on the basis of iconography this group has a lot of peculiarities which are dissimilar to the earlier Mātṛkā groups. Further, stylistically too, Mataria sculptures show greater sophistication, enabling a comparison with later sculptures and hence may be dated tentatively to late sixth or early seventh century AD.

The Mataria group includes images of Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, Vāyavī(?), and Aṁbikā(?) or Cāmuṇḍā, in association with Kālabhairava.[10] Brahmāṇī, though preserved only partially is identifiable due to the *akṣamālā* held in the right hand. Maheśvarī is seated on her bull vehicle, and carries a mirror and a mango twig in the left and right hands (*Pl.* 81). A playful child clings to the waist of the goddess. Kaumārī (*Pl.* 82) is seated on a cushion in a manner akin to the Amjhara (Group-B) (*Pl.* 76) and Samalaji (group-D) images (*Pl.* 79). She fondles the child with both the hands. No *āyudha* is represented, but a peacock is seen on the left side of the seat. The graceful forward bend of the body rhythmically co-ordinate with the limbs of the figure, the child and the neck of the peacock, which greatly enhance the beauty of the sculpture. Vārāhī (*Pl.* 83) has a boar vehicle, similar to the Samalaji (group-C) (*Pl.* 66) and Amjhara (group-B) examples. The goddess is represented with a human face and is conceived as suckling a child. Aindrī is seated on a crouching elephant (*Pl.* 84). She has a child seated on her folded left leg and held with both the hands. Vāyavī is seated on a stag. The goddess is seated with wide open legs while the child is placed horizontally on her lap. The hands of the figure are broken. The image identified earlier as Aṁbikā(?) is seated on a human figure, and hence may be Cāmuṇḍā (*Pl.* 85) in her beautiful form, in accordance with the earlier tradition in western India and the early typology of the goddess at Ellora (Cave Nos. 14 and 21) (*Pls.* 114 and 117). However, the Mataria image has only two hands, which is unusual in the images of Cāmuṇḍā.

With the left hand she holds a child and a mango twig in the right hand. The accompanying emaciated figure of Kālabhairava is four-armed and wears a *muṇḍamālā* and a snake (*Pl.* 86). The upper right and upper left hands hold *triśūla* and a *daṇḍa* respectively. The lower right hand carries a skull cup up to his lips and the corresponding left hand holds a severed human head.

The presence of Kālabhairava and Aṁbikā(?) or Cāmuṇḍā are unusual features, while Vayāvī has been noticed earlier while considering Samalaji (group-C) and Amjhara (group-B). The absence of Vaiṣṇavī in this group is conspicuous. The iconographical significance of the association of Kālabhairava with the Mātṛkās could be dealt with in a later context.

The early seventh century rock-cut sculptural relief of the Saptamātṛkā group at Mandor (Rajasthan)[11] is of much significance in tracing the origin of the organizational pattern and the order of the western Indian Mātṛkās in the medieval temples[12] (*Pl.* 87). Further, as pointed out in the beginning of chapter 5, a large number of the available Mātṛkā sculptures in western India have come down to us removed from their original context (the original order, number and location), and hence an insight into the evolution of these aspects in the iconography is well-nigh impossible. The Mandor group of Mātṛkās on the other hand is an exception from this, and since it exemplify a distinct approach in terms of these above considerations, (which also show certain basic differences from the earlier and contemporary tradition in central India), they could be considered for a certain general understanding of the western Indian tradition. However, how much comparison that the Mandor group can possibly lent itself to a generalization upon the earlier and contemporary practices in western India, with regard to the order of the Mātṛkās, will remain an yet open question. Further, this group is one of the early examples of dancing Mātṛkās from this region (though not all of them are in dancing postures) along with dancing Gaṇeśa and Śiva.[13]

The four-handed, dancing Gaṇeśa in *lalita* posture, holding a bowl of *modaka* in the upper left hand and the lower right hand in *ḍola-hasta* is at the beginning of the group. The *āyudhas* in the other hands of the deity are not discernible. The standing two-handed Brahmāṇī holds a *kamaṇḍalu* in the left hand and the right hand is in *abhaya-hasta.* Next figure is the four-handed Vaiṣṇavī. She holds a *śaṅkha* and a staff like *gadā,* in the lower left and upper right hands and the other *āyudha*s are obliterated. The fourth figure is the two-handed Maheśvarī whose bull vehicle is seen standing behind the goddess. Next to her is the four-handed Śiva, whose *āyudha*s are mutilated. The lower right hand is in *ḍola-hasta*. Next to Śiva is seen Kaumārī's vehicle and in one of the two hands the goddess holds a *śakti.* The next figure which is badly damaged might have been four-handed Vārāhī. The sixth goddess is the two-handed Aindrī, whose elephant vehicle is seen behind her. The last figure is that of the six-handed emaciated Cāmuṇḍā who has a human corpse as her *vāhana*. Her *muṇḍamālā* is clearly discernible but the *āyudha*s are mutilated.

The peculiar order in which the Mātṛkās and the Śiva are arranged is unique at Mandor, which is clearly distinct from the contemporary practice prevalent in central India. The placement of Śiva in the centre of the Mātṛkā group at Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole (*Pl.* 45), possibly is the only antecedent which can be referred to while considering the particular order seen in the Mandor group, but this too is not without certain dissimilarities in details. The significant alterations at Mandor, in contrast to central India and Aihole, is in the placement of Śiva in the middle of the panel (instead of placing him at the beginning), and more significantly, also in the positional interchanging of Maheśvarī and Vaiṣṇavī. Maheśvarī, instead of occupying the second position in the order of Mātṛkās (which is noticed universally), takes the third place, effecting the shift of Kaumārī to fourth place, after Śiva. Vaiṣṇavī in turn, occupies the second position which is normally occupied by Maheśvarī. The *Śaiva* dominance is thus established by shifting Vaiṣṇavī from the normal central location (usually the fourth in the order, flanked by three goddesses on each sides), as the dancing Śiva takes the central position. Joanna Williams notices that, "the early Mātṛkā sets from Udayagiri, Besnagar, etc. are all seated and the Mandor standing Mātṛkās open the way to very distinctive regional iconography". Further, "this relief shows the artists of Rajasthan using pan-Indian stylistic forms to represent local currents of beliefs".[14] As already noted standing type originates much earlier in western India and hence Mandor group in fact could be considered on the basis of further experimentation since at least some of the goddesses are depicted in dancing postures. However, the Mandor Mātṛkā group could be considered as opening the way to a distinctive regional iconography, if considered as a prototype for the Mātṛkā representations in the medieval temples such as, Abaneri, Auwa, Phalodi, etc.[15] Joanna Williams however does not define, what exactly these "local currents of beliefs" are, but as pointed out by Michael W. Meister this may be indicating the *Śaiva* dominance in the Mātṛkā worship.

Certain aspects of Mandor Mātṛkās point out that they belong to the transitional phase of greater elaboration. It may be noted that Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī and Vārāhī(?) are devoid of *vāhanas*, though at the same time they display certain distinguishing iconographical features. At the same time, the four-handed Gaṇeśa, Śiva, Vaiṣṇavī, and the six-handed Cāmuṇḍā, indicate elements of elaboration in the iconography. Stylistically the sculptural group belongs to the early seventh century AD, or at least within the first half of seventh century AD,[16] and together with the Samalaji (group-D) (the three-headed Brahmāṇī and four-handed Kaumārī) suggest transition from the rudimentary significatory codes of iconographical details to a more elaborative approach. Further, these may also indicate certain influences deriving from central India, particularly with regard to the three-headed Brahmāṇī seen earlier at Naharghati (Deogarh).

In the second half of sixth century and early seventh century a number of Mātṛkā sets came to be carved at different smaller local centres in Gujarat. A seated Mātṛkā (*Pl.* 88), along with Skanda, from Dhank (Junagadh, Gujarat), the groups of Mātṛkās from Pasthar (Gujarat) and Kotesvar (north Gujarat) exemplify the diffusion and the adaptations of the mid-sixth century of Samalaji-Amjhara seated type. In these, relatively, a certain regression of the developed style of the Samalaji-Amjhara sculptures is obvious, which could either be due to the involvement of less proficient craftsmen in such undertakings, or alternatively, could be ascribed to political and economic regressions during this period. However, a revival of the style in the seated type is obvious soon after this, as evident in the sculptures from south Rajasthan such as Mt. Abu, Malagon (Sirohi dist.) Further elaboration in this direction is outside the scope of the present work, and an in-depth and detailed analysis calls for specific researches in the area of stylistic shifts.

The goddess from Dhank (*Pl.* 88),[17] is seated on a low throne, in the posture similar to that of the contemporary Viśvarūpa images from Samalaji.[18] The 'U'-shaped loop hanging from the waist band is a further suggestion of its derivation from Samalaji proto-type. The goddess wears a jewelled crown, which may indicate her identity as Aindrī. Her right hand is partially broken and the *āyudha* is lost. In the left hand a child is supported, in a rather uncomfortable manner. No *vāhana* is represented. Compared to the similar seated images from Kotesvar (*Pls.* 89 to 93), this image too is frontal and hence a date of early seventh century AD would be logical. Skanda stands in *samabhaṅga,* holding a *śakti* and a cock in the right and left hands, a derivation from the images of the god from Tanesara and Samalaji (group-B) (*Pl.* 61).

The iconographical details and distinctions of the group of five Mātṛkās and Gaṇeśa hailing from Pasthar (Gujarat) are lost due to weathering. All the figures appear to be two-handed. The Cāmuṇḍā has an emaciated body. One figure is seated on a low throne, similar to the Dhank Mātṛkā discussed above and the other figures are seated in *lalitāsana*. The Mātṛkās hold their respective *āyudha*s as also the children.

The Mātṛkā group from Kotesvar preserve Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, Cāmuṇḍā, *vīṇādhara* Śiva and Gaṇeśa[19] (*Pls.* 89 to 93). The image of Brahmāṇī (*Pl.* 89) is seated on a *haṁsa*, with a body disposition similar to the Samalaji Brahmāṇī (group-D, *Pl.* 80). However, constrained and frontal treatment of the volumes are obvious. The two-handed goddess holds *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* in the right and left hands. The three heads, too, derive from the Samalaji Brahmāṇī mentioned above. Vaiṣṇavī has four hands (*Pl.* 90). With the left hand she holds a child and the right hand touches the lower part of the left breast. In the upper right and left hands she holds a *gadā* and a *cakra* respectively. The absence of *vāhana* is noticeable. Though frontal in overall organization, the slightly tilted positioning of the head has lent a graceful feeling to the image. Vārāhī has the head of a boar (*Pl.* 92). The child which is held by the lower right hand hangs from the snout of the goddess's, similar to the figure of Bhūdevī in certain Varāha images. She holds a *gadā, cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper right, upper left and lower left hands. An elaborate *vanamālā* adorn her. The goddess has no *vāhana*, but a pair of snakes are seen under her feet, suggesting *pātāla*, which also derives from the images of Varāha. Aindrī (*Pl.* 91) is seated on a crouching elephant and holds a child in a manner similar to Vaiṣṇavī. In her upper right and left hands she carries *vajra* and *gadā* respectively. The emaciated Cāmuṇḍā is seated on a human corpse and wears a *muṇḍamālā* (*Pl.* 93). In the lower right hand she holds a skull cup and the little finger of the lower left hand touches the mouth suggesting the blood drinking aspect of the goddess. The objects in the upper hands are indistinct. The four-handed *vīṇādhara* Śiva is seated on Nandī. In the upper right and left hands he has *triśūla* and snake. Gaṇeśa too is four-handed and holds *akṣamālā* and *paraśu* in the upper right and left hands.

Derivative of the earlier Samalaji-Amjhara (group-D and group-B, respectively) and Mataria format, Kotesvar figures are however carved in shallow relief, leaving a clumsy and crude quality, when compared to the more sophisticated earlier and later Mātṛkās of the region. Considering the elaboration in the iconographical details, a late sixth century or first quarter of seventh century date would be logical for these images. Further, the specific details of the seated positions and the disposition of limbs of these Mātṛkās relate to a number of Mātṛkā sculptures belonging to eighth-ninth centuries, which enable us to imagine them to open a fresh trend in compositional pattern in the western Indian Mātṛkā tradition.

The three seated Mātṛkās, Kaumārī, Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā, of Mt. Abu, stylistically and iconographically can be dated to the mid-seventh century AD.[20] Kaumārī is two-handed and holds a *śakti* and a child in the right and left hands. A peacock is represented in front of the seated goddess. Seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* on a human figure, Vārāhī is four-handed and boar-faced (*Pl.* 94). In the upper right and left hands she holds *gadā* and *cakra*. With the lower hands she supports a child. The four-handed emaciated Cāmuṇḍā is seated on a human corpse (*Pl.* 95). She holds a severed head and a *khaṭvāṅga* in the lower and upper right hands. Her lower left hand probably touched the mouth and the upper left hand probably held a sword. These images are stylistically close to the Mataria images. Especially noteworthy are the ways the postures are visualized, which suggest the ongoing experimentations in the seated positions, which find further elaborate treatment in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Further Elaborations : Central India

The conflation of two distinct aspects of Mātṛkās, namely the motherly and militant personality traits, achieved by the first half of the sixth century in central India, is an *a priori* condition for the image makers in the later periods. However, further elaboration in the direction of the format continued, using ingenious compositional skills, modifications in the postures and in the elaborations of these. Considering the sculptures created at widely distant centres, which definitely cannot form a unified related development (unlike that of western India), the groups of images discussed in this section derive from disparate heterogeneous traditions and hence are treated as such. However, what is implied as a definite fact is that from around the mid-sixth century onwards Saptamātṛkā icons came to be made at widely distant centres. Though, these followed a pan-Indian iconographical format, they display the characteristic stylistic and formal features of the specific regional guilds, and hence the following discussion inevitably treats most of the sculptural groups in isolation.

Though all the early Mātṛkā groups in central India exemplify seated position, in the later periods the standing and dancing types also came to be made along with the earlier mode. The four Mātṛkā images hailing from Kota (Shivpuri, M.P.) is one of the earliest representation of dancing Mātṛkās from this region (*Pls.* 96 to 99). The group, on the basis of the late Gupta style, can be assigned a date either of late sixth or early seventh century AD. All the goddesses are in *kṣipta* posture with the right feet in *kuñcita* position. Brahmāṇī is four-handed, of which the two lower hands are broken off (*Pl.* 96). The objects held in the other two hands are not distinct. All the three heads, evident in the broken portion, are also lost totally. The lotus flower depicted on the pedestal with incised lines is a speciality, which other sculptures of the group do not have. Kaumārī is two-handed and holds what could be a *śakti* in the right hand (*Pl.* 97). The left hand holds an indistinct object, probably a flower. The hair is arranged in *śikhaṇḍaka* type at the top of the head. Near to the right foot of the goddess is her peacock vehicle. Aindrī holds a *vajra* in the right hand (*Pl.* 98). The left hand is folded with the palm reaching the shoulder and holds what looks like a flower. The elephant *vāhana* is shown behind the goddess. The children are conspicuously absent in the iconographical schema, which however cannot be ascertained conclusively, since all the goddesses in the group are not preserved. The dancing emaciated Cāmuṇḍā is four-handed (*Pl.* 99). In the lower right and the upper right hands, she holds a skull-cup and a knife respectively. The left normal hand is held near the shoulder identical to Aindrī and Kaumārī. The upper left hand holds a *khaṭvāṅga*. A *muṇḍamālā* adorns the goddess. The spokey hair is tied together on the top of the head with a snake depicted in the middle. The slight sideways tilt of the heads of the figures accentuates the swaying movements, and the half closed eyes impart a meditative quality. The rhythmic movement of dance is enhanced by the softly undulating contours of the body, which smoothly merge into each other organically.

The five Mātṛkā sculptures hailing from Pachar (Gaya, Bihar) are known from what must have been a complete group of seven goddess. The crude workmanship of the sculptures, leaves the dating problematic. Yet, on the basis of iconographical peculiarities this group can be dated to mid-sixth century AD, or slightly later.

Brahmāṇī from the Pachar group (*Pl.* 100) is seated on a stalked lotus pedestal, comparable to the earlier example from Muṇḍeśvarī. The goddess has three heads and two hands. A vessel like object is held in the left hand and the right hand is mutilated. Maheśvarī and the other goddesses are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana*. Maheśvarī's bull vehicle is represented on the pedestal (*Pl.* 101). She holds a long object, what might have been a *śūla*. Kaumārī's vehicle, peacock, is carved indistinctively (*Pl.* 102) but she holds a *śakti* in the left hand and probably a *bījapūraka* fruit in the right hand. Vaiṣṇavī is seated on Garuḍa, who is represented in the form of a bird, except for the human head. The goddess is four-handed, but all the *āyudha*s are badly weathered. Cāmuṇḍā is seated on a human corpse (*Pl.* 103). Except for the sunken belly and pendulant breasts, the other parts of the body are in normal human form.

The Saptamātṛkā *paṭa* from Vindhyachal (Mirzapur, U.P.), preserved in the State Museum, Lucknow can be ascribed a date of mid-seventh century AD. The goddesses are accompanied by *vīṇādhara* Śiva who is seated in *mahārājalīlāsana*. His head is mutilated. All the goddesses, except Brahmāṇī, are seated in the same posture as Śiva. Brahmāṇī is seated in *padmāsana* and has a *yogapaṭa* around her legs. Her hair is arranged in *jaṭājūṭa* fashion. Her right hand holds an *akṣamālā* and the left hand has a water pot. Maheśvarī holds a *śūla* in the left hand. The next figure is Kaumārī whose right hand is in *abhaya-mudrā.* Vaiṣṇavī alone is four-handed. The upper right and left hands hold *gadā* and *cakra* respectively. The lower right and left hands hold *bījapūraka* and *śaṅkha* respectively. She is also adorned with *vanamālā* and crown. Vārāhī is pot-bellied and the boar face is depicted sideways. The left hand held near the snout holds a vessel. In the right hand she holds what appear to be a fish. Aindrī is adorned with a crown and holds a *vajra* in the left hand and a *bījapūraka* in the right. The last figure is Cāmuṇḍā. Her body is emaciated and has long pendent breasts. A *khaṭvāṅga* is held between the folded left hand. The left palm is held near the mouth suggesting the drinking of blood. All the figures have large oval halos around their heads.

An image of Vārāhī housed in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, is dated to Gupta period. In the light of the origin of development of Vārāhī's iconography, a seventh century AD date would be more appropriate. The boar head with a prominent snout is slightly off centre, breaking the symmetry. The pendant breasts and pot-belly are significant features, observed also in the example from Vindhyachal. In the left hand holding a cup filled with some kind of food is also comparable to the above. The portrayal of a certain dynamism and fearsome expression is a characteristic feature of medieval images of this goddess, possibly implying a Tāntric influence.

The Early Traditions : Orissa

Though the goddesses cult is believed to have been prevailing in the region from a very ancient past, it is only from sixth-seventh centuries AD onward that definite historical evidences are found.[21] Different *Purāṇa*s and *Tantra*s refer to a number of *Śakti-pīṭha*s of which some important ones are located in eastern India.[22] However, the number of *Śakti-pīṭha*s vary considerably in different texts, till it came to be settled on the conventional 108 in all.[23] Significantly the persistent references on some of them belong to eastern India, establishing the Tāntric orientation of medieval *Śākta* religion in this region. Even today this part of the country is predominantly *Śākta* oriented, which further corroborates the deep-rooted tradition.

The earliest known Saptamātṛkā group in Orissa is considered to be that of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple at Bhubanesvar (*Pls.* 104 & 105). Iconographically, this group of images belong to an evolved phase. There are hardly any sculptural evidences to illustrate an earlier stage of Mātṛkā iconography, unlike other regions. K.R. Srinivasan opines that the Mātṛkā tradition probably has reached this region from the Cālukyan tradition.[24] However, there is no definite evidence to prove this proposition. However, such a possibility would not be totally invalid. Along with Cālukyan influence, the impact from central India, Gangetic valley and western India should also be taken into consideration. These would be analyzed in the following discussion, while dealing with specific groups of Mātṛkās. However, it may be noted now itself that, such inflow of ideas have a wider significance. An instance of this nature may be noted in the case of Lakulīśa cult and imagery, which had spread to this region from western India.[25]

As such the instances of Mātṛkā images as part of the sculptural layout of the structural temples is rather rare, exceptions from this are the temples of the medieval period. However, in Orissa we have at least two early examples, which can throw light on the context and the manner of integration of Mātṛkās into the iconographical programme of the structural temple.

While dealing with the problem of the external influences and the evolutionary process of Mātṛkā iconography in the region of Orissa, it would be worth scanning around to see whether it is possible to relate some earlier specimens of Mātṛkā sculptures with the more developed Orissan examples. The Mātṛkā sculptures hailing from Saraikela (Bihar), Pachar (Bihar), Aindrī of Amanwa (Bihar) and certain features of the Deccani tradition could be compared with Orissan examples. The sculptures from Pachar (*Pls.* 100 to 103), Amanwa (*Pl.* 56) and the early Deccani tradition are definitely earlier than the earliest known Orissan example and might have been the sources for the Orissan artist to a great extent. A certain parallelism in terms of compositional particularities can also be observed between Ellora Mātṛkās and the Orissan tradition. In both the cases the *vāhana*s are represented in rectangular compartments below the seats of the goddess, which might be considered as influence from the earlier tradition at Ellora upon Orissan artists. However, it may be noted that, in the known Mātṛkā sculptures from the immediate vicinity of Orissa (such as from Bihar) the goddesses sit directly on the respective animals, without the pedestals. Further discussions on the comparative iconographical features are taken-up in the concluding section, and for the present we may proceed with the discussion of Saraikela Mātṛkās.

The actual find spot of a group of seven Mātṛkā sculptures in Patna museum (said to be from the old Saraikela State, part of present Bihar state) is unknown. (*Pls.* 106 to 109). Frederick Asher opines that these sculptures may be belonging to some part of Orissa, probably Khiching.[26] As for their dating, earlier they were assigned to twelfth century AD.[27] U.P. Shah considers them as belonging to sixth-seventh centuries AD,[28] Ashar ascribes eighth century AD date for these sculptures,[29] and opines that the modelling is gentle, which is a reminder of the Gupta tradition, vestiges of which persisted in large parts of Eastern India into the opening years of Pāla authority. "Were they so late, we could accept the ossified modelling, pinched features, and lavish, crisply rendered ornament customary in sculpture of both Orissa and Bengal at that time".[30]

This group of Mātṛkā sculptures are mentioned as being accompanied by the images of Śiva and Pārvatī and that of a goat-headed deity. Asher calls the goat-headed figure as Dakṣa.[31] U.P. Shah considers the figure as Naigameṣa.[32] It is unlikely that the sculptures of Śiva-Pārvatī and that of goat-headed deity would belong to a Saptamātṛkā group, since both these are never seen along with any known Mātṛkā groups. Further, the goat-headed figure is represented standing, which is inconsistent with the sitting Mātṛkās. Possibly these sculptures do not belong to the Mātṛkā group, and the sculptures of Śiva and Gaṇeśa which might have accompanied the group are missing.

All the goddesses of the Patna Museum group are seated with both the legs folded up, though not crossing each other, except Vārāhī, who is seated in *pralaṁbapādāsana*. Similarly all the goddesses except Vārāhī carry children. Brahmānī is two-handed and is seated on a lotus, and on the pedestal is her *haṁsa* vehicle (*Pl.* 106). The goddess holds an *akṣamālā* in the right hand. A child is placed on the left thigh, caressed by the left hand. The goddess wears *jaṭāmukuṭa,* decorated with jewels. Maheśvarī too is two-handed, and holds *triśūla* in the right and a child in the left hand, similar to Brahmāṇī. She too has a decorated *jaṭājūṭa.* On the forehead the third eye is prominently delineated. Her *vāhana*, Nandī is depicted on the pedestal. Kaumārī holds a *śakti* in the right hand and carries a child (*Pl.* 107). Similarly her peacock vehicle occupies the narrow space on the pedestal. Vaiṣṇavī is four-handed and holds a *bījapūraka, cakra, gadā,* and a child, in the lower right, upper right, upper left and lower left hands, respectively. She is adorned with a *kirīṭamukuṭa.* The wings of the human faced Garuḍa are very prominently seen. Vārāhī is two-handed, but both are broken (*Pl.* 108). Unlike other goddesses she is seated on a couch. The goddess is pot-bellied and boar-faced. A diminutive *gaṇa*-like figure is seated between her legs, who could be considered as her *vāhana*. Aindrī is two-handed and has an elaborated hairdo. She holds a large *vajra* in the right hand and a child in the left. Her *vāhana* is elephant. The emaciated Cāmuṇḍā is four-handed (*Pl.* 109). Her belly is sunken and the breasts are pendulant. The popping eyes and gaping mouth endow a terrifying look to the figure. Yet, she holds a child with the left hand who is seated on the left thigh of the goddess. Her owl vehicle is present on the pedestal. The goddess holds a knife, a human being and a *muṇḍa* in the lower right, upper right and upper left hands. Further, a human head lies horizontally on her lap.

Considering the iconographical peculiarities, the group of Mātṛkās discussed above, can be dated to early seventh century AD. All the goddesses, except Vaiṣṇavī and Cāmuṇḍā are two-handed, which is an early feature in Mātṛkā iconography. Iconographically, they exemplify elements related to Gangetic plains, and Madhyadeśa. Certain features, however are akin to later developments in the Orissan tradition. Iconography of Vārāhī is especially noteworthy in this context. The peculiar delineation of the snout of Vārāhī, the *nara-vāhana*, and the pot-belly are common elements in both. However, the latter aspect is also related to the examples from Pachar, the Bharat Kala Bhavan (Varanasi), and the Vindhyachal (U.P.) images. The *nara-vāhana* feature too is not exclusive to eastern India since a number of Vārāhī images in western India are also observed as having this feature. The seated position of the other goddesses are akin to the images from Pachar (*Pls.* 100 to 103) and Amanwa (*Pl.* 56). The Pachar images might be earlier, and hence appear to have functioned as the immediate proto-type of this group of Mātṛkās.[33]

On the basis of paleography, K.R. Panigrahi dates the Paraśurāmeśvara temple (Bhubanesvar) to the first half of seventh century AD.[34] The Saptamātṛkā group is carved in low relief in the shallow rectangular niches at the lowest *bhadra* of the *jagamohana* on the northern wall (*Pls.* 104 & 105). Apart from the Mātṛkās the images of Śiva-Pārvatī, Navagrahas and Lakulīśa occupy the whole length of the base of the *jagamohana*. The goddesses are separated from each other with the projecting rectangular frames. All the goddesses are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* and the accompanying figures of Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa are seated in *mahārājalīlāsana* on the extreme right and left respectively. Śiva is two-handed and in the right hand holds a flower. The left hand rests on the folded leg. The ithyphallic aspect is discernible. His *vāhana* Nandī is present on the pedestal. All the goddesses wear *kucabandha*. Brahmāṇī is three-headed and four-handed. She carries an *akṣamālā* and a *bījapūraka* in the upper and lower right hands. In the upper and lower left hands she holds a flower and a vase. While Brahmāṇī's *haṁsa vāhana* is discernible, the *vāhana*s of Maheśvarī, Kaumārī and Vaiṣṇavī are lost. Maheśvarī holds a *bījapūraka*, an *akṣamālā*, a vase and a *triśūla* in the lower right, upper right, upper left and lower left hands respectively. The two-handed Kaumārī holds a *bījapūraka* and a *śakti* in the right and left hands. The four-handed Vaiṣṇavī holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper right and lower left hands. The objects in the lower right hand is not discernible. The upper left hand probably carries a *gadā*. Aindrī is two-handed and holds a vase and a *vajra* in right and left hands. On the pedestal can be seen her elephant *vāhana*. The boar-faced Vārāhī's *vāhana* is a human being in animal posture, with the legs and hands planted on the ground. Having a large belly, Vārāhī carries a fish, flower and a *paraśu* in the lower right, upper right and upper left hands. The object in the lower left hand is either a cup or a vase. It may be noted that there is a variation in the order of Aindrī and Vārāhī. In the conventional order Vārāhī occupies the place on the left of Vaiṣṇavī. In this instance Aindrī occupies the place of Vārāhī and in turn the latter is assigned the place on the immediate right of Cāmuṇḍā. The emaciated Cāmuṇḍā's *vāhana* is an owl and she holds a flower, a *triśūla*, and a skull cup in the upper right, upper left and lower left hands. The object in the lower right hand is indistinct, but seems to be a *bījapūraka*. Cāmuṇḍā's breasts are pendant and stomach sunken. Her *jaṭājūṭa* in adorned with a skull. The four-handed Gaṇeśa has no *vāhana*. He holds a flower, *akṣamālā, paraśu* and *modaka*, in the lower right, upper right, upper left and lower left hands respectively. The absence of any child in association with the goddesses is conspicuous, probably the *bījapūraka* fruit replaces such a convention and symbolically suggests the maternal aspect of the deities.

The Early Traditions : Ellora

Cave Nos. 14, 21, 22, 16-B and 16, at Ellora have special shrines or chambers demarcated to house Mātṛkā icons, though Cave No. 14 being relatively simpler in design locates the Mātṛkās in a large niche. Except in the case of 16-B, which is a minor cave having a single porch, all the other Mātṛkā groups are integral to the elaborate iconographic programme of each of these caves. In all these, the Mātṛkās are carved on the southern side of the sanctum, facing northern direction. In the case of Cave Nos. 21, 22 and 16 the southern *upavarṇaka* chambers house the images, whereas in the Cave No. 14 they are carved on the south wall at the eastern end, facing the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. Considering the later date of the Cave No. 16, this Mātṛkā group is discussed in the chapter to follow.

Two important groups of Mātṛkās, which are slightly earlier than the Ellora Mātṛkā sculptural groups, and decisive for the Ellora tradition are those hailing from Ravulaphadi at

Aihole, and the one at Elephanta. In the former, Mātṛkās are located in the northern *upavarṇaka* chamber, which differ from the Ellora tradition. However, the Ellora convention of the location is comparable to that of Elephanta, since the Mātṛkā group at Elephanta is carved at the end of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* in the western *upavarṇaka* chamber in the east wing of the cave, which is followed at Ellora. Also, in terms of the order and organization of the Mātṛkā groups, Ellora tradition owes greatly to the convention established at Elephanta. A close similarity in the iconographic layout is noticed between Elephanta east wing and Cave No. 21 of Ellora. However, it may be pointed out that unlike at Ellora, the Elephanta Mātṛkās are portrayed as standing and incorporate the idea of *vāhana* ingeniously which are represented on the *dhvajastambha* on the left sides of each of the goddesses. The stances, the body flexions, and the manner of holding children in this group are akin to the contemporary north-western sites such as Samalaji and Tintoi. In terms of compositional peculiarities, Elephanta group specifically relate to the Tintoi convention, where the arched body flexions and the general rhythmic flow, are punctuated with the vertical components; the animal standards or the pilaster like structures, as has already been pointed out in the previous chapter. At the same time, the seated position of the goddesses at Ellora is likely to have derived from the convention observed in the early Mātṛkā sculptures of central India, for instance those of Besnagar and Deogarh.

In terms of the persistence of certain usages, the depiction of the *vāhana*s in the Ellora Mātṛkā images is significant. Right from the early group onwards, the *vāhana*s are represented below the pedestals under the respective Mātṛkās as a symbol in their identification. This is in contrast with the central and western Indian examples where Mātṛkās are represented as seated on their respective *vāhanas*. The *vāhanas* of Ellora Mātṛkās are enclosed in frames on the pedestal below each goddess. This convention is followed in Cave Nos. 14, 21, 22, 16-B and in a modified manner in Cave No. 16 (*Pls*. 179 & 180).

A most significant iconographical component, specific to Ellora (and noticed in few other Mātṛkā groups elsewhere, in western India) is the inclusion of Mahākāla (Kālabhairava, or Kāla) along with Kālī at the left end of the Mātṛkā row, after the place of Gaṇeśa. The earliest instance of Kāla along with Mātṛkās has been noticed at Elephanta and Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole, where, in the latter the small skeletal figure of the deity is wedged into the north-western corner of the group (*Pl*. 43). The place of this figure within the overall layout is rather insignificant, whereas in the Ellora Mātṛkā groups this inclusion receives significant prominence, which adds up a great deal in the totality of meaning in the Mātṛkā symbology. Images of Mahākāla icons have already been noted in the contemporary Mātṛkā group at Elephanta (*Pl*. 40), and Mataria in north Gujarat (*Pl*. 86). The later images of the same at Karvan and Vadaval in Gujarat (*Pls*. 159 & 167) enables one to visualize the diffusion of the iconographic idea originating from Deccan and spreading to northern regions. According to K.V. Soundara Rajan the Saptamātṛkā cult itself spread to western India from Cālukyan region.[35] Such a possibility is however, ruled out, in the light of the extant sculptures of Mātṛkās in central India and western India during fifth and sixth centuries AD. Yet, in terms of the diffusion of the concept of Mātṛkās along with Kālabhairava and Kālī, such a theory might be relevant to consider.

The iconography of Mātṛkās at Ellora exemplify certain specific preferences on the basis of cultic affiliations and their persistence. Yet, significant variations in the cultic import are also inferable. It goes without saying that the Mātṛkā worship at Ellora had a predominant Śaivaite bearing. Probably an exception form this rule is the case of Cave No. 14. The prominent position of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī on the northern wall of this cave, is probably due to the fact that the cave was dedicated to Devī. James Fergusson and James Burgess have described the main shrine as containing a broken image of Bhavānī or Durgā and as having an *agnikuṇḍa* for performing rituals.[36] The *tāṇḍava* Śiva does not flank Saptamātṛkās, but is portrayed along with other *Śaiva* themes on the south wall. Probably the iconographical programme of Cave No. 14 exemplifies a stage wherein the integration of the Śakti and Śiva cults had not yet been achieved totally.[37]

At Ellora, cultically, a *Śaiva-Śākta* merger and its reflection can be observed in certain iconographic forms, such as that of *Andhakāsuravadha* depictions. In the two depictions of the theme (Cave No. 16 and Cave No. 15, (*Pl.* 110)) the emaciated, terrifying Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā is presented right below the *asura*, who has been pierced on the *triśūla* of Śiva. The large images of the gruesome and awe-inspiring goddess, who is an emanation of the benevolent consort of Śiva, in both the representations have gaping mouths and popping eyes, and each of them hold a skull cup below the figure of Andhakāsura. The image of the beautiful goddess seated on the left side in both the representations is the benign Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva and the counter-form of Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā.

In the depictions of *Andhakāsuravadha* under consideration, the two versions of the almost similar myths coalesce to form yet another cogent myth. According to *Varāha Purāṇa*, Śiva created Yogeśvarī out of the flames issuing from his mouth in order to stop the multiplication of Andhakāsura. The eight mothers including Yogeśvarī dried up the flowing blood from the *asura* by burning it with flames issuing from their mouths.[38] In the sculptures, the eight goddesses are not portrayed, thus canceling out the possibility of this version being the source for the depictions. According to *Devī-Māhātmya,* it is specifically Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā alone who drinks Raktabīja's blood, thus stopping the multiplication of the *asura*.[39] If we consider that the gruesome goddess is Kālī, and the goddess seated on the left as Pārvatī, then it may be assumed that the former is an emanation of the latter.

Yet another example of a similar process is observed in the depiction of *Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrti* in the porch of Cave No. 16. The Mātṛkās including Cāmuṇḍā are represented as seated on the ground below the right leg of Śiva (*Pl.* 111). They do not take part in the combat, and are passive observers of the drama. Further, Pārvatī the consort seated on the left side of Śiva, watches the climactic victory.

These instances of *Śaiva-Śākta* coalescence, and the very many depictions of Mahiṣāsuramardinī at different caves at Ellora, bring forth a relatively less subsumed Devī cult, in the spirit of *Devī-Māhātmya*, though otherwise it hardly ever emerged independent and separate from the *Śaiva* domination. In fact, the *Śākta* cult position at Ellora in relation to other dominant sectarian trends is illustrative of the historical interpretation attempted in the last chapter.

Dating of Ellora Brāhmanical caves is a controversial issue in general. Opinions on the relative dates also vary considerably, for instance that of Cave No. 14 and 21.[40] The sculptural qualities and the presentation of Mātṛkās in these two cases echo each other, pointing out an almost contemporary activity that took place in these caves. Yet, the elaborate usages of space and the more detailed decorative manner of treatment in Cave No. 21, appears to be a step ahead of Cave No. 14. However, this could also be due to the differences in the approaches of separate guilds. The similarity in the order, and iconographical layout, however may be due to their contemporaneity.

There are certain common conventions that are followed in Cave No. 14 and Cave No. 21. Such instances are noticed in the oval-shaped halos, Mātṛkās seated on a bench-like common seat, and the depiction of *vāhana*s on the pedestals below the feet of the goddess. Iconographical layout and the order of the Mātṛkās are also similar to each other. Yet, the peculiar kind of aristocratic sophistication and ease, combined with the variations in the seated positions, dispositions of heads and hands in the Cave No. 21 are in contrast with the Cave No. 14 Mātṛkās. Cave No. 14 Mātṛkās are tranquil, whereas Cave No. 21 Mātṛkās are suffused with animation and rhythm. The ornamentation is also minimum in the Cave No. 14 Mātṛkās, whereas the Cave No. 21 Mātṛkās are bedecked with elaborate jewellery and intricate hair decorations. The lower limbs of the Cave No. 21 Mātṛkās are disproportionate. The sculptor seems to have taken less interest in the delineation of the portion below the waist. Such a result was probably due to the limited space available between the pedestal and the seat. In the Cave No. 14, the space between the pedestal and the seat is more than what is actually required, which has led to providing small raised supports for the pendant legs of the goddesses.

Each of the Cave No. 14 Mātṛkās are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana,* with straight and frontal postures. This is in contrast with the much varied postures, hand and head dispositions of the Mātṛkās in Cave No. 21. Yet, the spatial usage is much more economical and classical in Cave No. 14 compared to Cave No. 21. The limitation in the availability of space in the Cave No. 14, does not however, constrain the natural movements and postures of the figures. As a logical alternative to the limitation in space, the accompanying Śiva is portrayed on the eastern wall, allowing adequate space for the goddesses to occupy at ease in their respective places. The tranquil austerity, the trim and slightly elongated torso, neck and faces of Cave No. 14 Mātṛkās, are comparable to the Gupta prototypes from central India (*Pl.* 25). Especially noticeable is the similarity in the placement of the child between the legs of Vaiṣṇavī of Cave No. 14 and the Besnagar Mātṛkā.

The Śiva in the company of Mātṛkās of Cave No. 14 is seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* (*Pl.* 112). He holds *ḍamaru* and a *paraśu* in the upper right and left hands. The lower right hand is held near the chest in *vitarka-mudrā* and the lower left hand is placed on the seat so as to support the torso leaning to the left. Śiva wears an elaborate *jaṭājūṭa*. The iconography of the image has a close resemblance to the Dakṣiṇāmūrti form of Siva prevalent in South India.[41] Brahmāṇī holds an *akṣamālā* in the upper right hand. Rest of the hands are broken (*Pl.* 113). The goddess wears *mṛgacarma* on the left shoulder, which is in accordance with the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* description.[42] The lower left hand holds the hand of a child who stands on the pedestal. Maheśvarī has a *ḍamaru* in the upper left hand, and the lower right holds a child who stands on the right thigh (*Pl.* 113). Kaumārī has a mirror in the upper left hand, and the child seated on the left thigh is being supported by lower left hand (*Pl.* 113). Vaiṣṇavī has a *śaṅkha* in the upper left hand. With the lower right hand the goddess holds the hand of a child standing on the pedestal. Vārāhī has human a face and holds a mango twig (or a toy?) in the lower right hand. A child is placed on the left thigh, and caressed by the lower left hand. Aindrī has a *vajra* in the upper left hand and a child is placed on the left thigh. The four-handed Cāmuṇḍā is beautiful looking, and even she too carries a child (*Pl.* 114). The objects in her hands are mutilated. She has an owl as her *vāhana*.[43] All the other goddess have their usual *vāhanas*. Gaṇeśa is placed between Cāmuṇḍā and the emaciated images of Kāla and Kālī (*Pl.* 115). Kālī stands on the left of Kāla. The lower two hands of Kāla hold the hair of a small emaciated figure who is shown kneeling at the feet of Kāla. The upper right hand holds a flower-like object. The left hand of the two-handed Kālī is held near the cheeks.

On the extreme right end of the row of Mātṛkās in Cave No. 21, *vīṇādhara* Śiva is seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* (*Pl.* 116). He holds the musical instrument with the two normal hands. The upper left hand holds a snake and the other is broken. Brahmāṇī is seated in *pralaṁbapāda* (*Pl.* 116). Both Śiva and Brahmāṇī have elaborate *jaṭājūṭa*. Brahmāṇī holds lotuses in the two upper hands. The child accompanies her and she is devoid of jewellery and embellishments. Maheśvarī holds a child, who is seated on the left thigh with her lower left hand (*Pl.* 116). The other hands are broken. Kaumārī's body is turned to the left (*Pl.* 116). With the upper right hand she adjusts her hair as she looks into the mirror held in the upper left hand. A child is held with the lower left hand. Vaiṣṇavī holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper right and left hands (*Pl.* 117). A child is shown seated on the left thigh. Vārāhī has human face and an elaborate hairdo (*Pl.* 118). She is seated in an unusual cross-legged posture, with the torso and head turning to the left. She has a boar *vāhana*, which is similar to Samalaji (group-C) and Amjhara (group-B) images (*Pl.* 66). With her upper right hand she touches the locks of her hair, and as she leans on to the left side the weight of her body is supported by the lower left hand. The other two hands are missing. Aindrī holds a *vajra* in the upper left hand (*Pl.* 117). A child is seated on the left thigh. Here too, Cāmuṇḍā appears beautiful and benevolent (*Pl.* 117). The fragments of a child's feet are seen on the pedestal. The upper left hand holds a bell. The other hands and the *vāhana* of Cāmuṇḍā are mutilated. Gaṇeśa is at the end of the row and holds *paraśu* and *akṣamālā* in the upper right and left hands respectively (*Pl.* 117). In the lower left hand he holds a bowl of *modaka*. The same object is represented in the place of his *vāhana*. The group of Mātṛkās is flanked on the right and left walls by the enormously large images of dancing Śiva and Kāla and

Kālī (*Pl.* 119). The Śiva Tāṇḍava[44] in *kaṭisama karaṇa* is attended by Pārvatī, musicians and Devas. He has eight hands and an elaborate *jaṭājūṭa*. The emaciated Kāla on the west wall stands in the middle of the composition, with a flexed body. In the upper right hand he holds a crooked knife and a *khaṭvāṅga*(?) in the upper left hand. Kālī is depicted in profile on the left side of Kāla. An image of an aristocratic person, whose identification is difficult, stands on the right side of the Kāla. A skeletal figure is seen holding the feet of Kāla. A similar figure is also noticed in the case of the Cave No. 14 Kāla depiction. The Kālī of Cave No. 21 grabs the head of the kneeling figure, the act which is performed by Kāla in the case of Cave No. 14. The emaciated being who is at the feet of the deity may be the 'soul' or the initiated, who has traversed the paths of multiplicity of life and death. The wall behind the Mahākāla in Cave No. 21 is carefully delineated as a tree, probably symbolically suggesting the paradise. The Vidyādharas fly above the clouds, on the upper left hand corner of the sculptural relief.

The Mātṛkā relief at Ḍhokeśvara Mahādeva cave at Takli village, sixty miles south of Ellora, is formalistically very close to the Cave No. 21 Mātṛkā group (*Pl.* 120).[45] The Mātṛkā group in this cave is located on the south wall of the *maṇḍapa,* unlike the Ellora tradition. Here, the Mātṛkās are located right at the beginning of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, which also differs from Ellora.[46] However, iconographically the group shows only minor variations from the Cave No. 21 of Ellora.[47] All the goddesses are two-armed and are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana,* except Vārāhī who is seated in *utkuṭika* posture. Below their seats on the pedestal, the respective *vāhana*s are represented in a similar manner as in Cave No. 14 and Cave No. 21 at Ellora. Brahmāṇī is attended upon by a female figure holding a *pustaka* in place of her *vāhana*, the usual *haṁsa*. Unlike the contemporary example at Ellora the Vārāhī of this group has boar head and Cāmuṇḍā has the jackal mount instead of the owl. The most unique feature of this representation, a tree motif with branches and foliages shown behind the goddess, is comparable to the tree depicted behind the Kālabhairava panel at Cave No. 21.

The Mātṛkā group in the Cave No. 16-B belongs to a later phase of development. This cave which is very simple in design, is entirely dedicated to a Saptamātṛkā group. The goddesses are shown standing and face western direction unlike the other Ellora examples. The representation of *vāhana*s follow the earlier convention. Their stances are rather odd and clumsy. Their large hips and unconvincing *tribhaṅga* is possibly due to inferior workmanship. The details of iconography are almost lost. All the Mātṛkās appear to be four-handed and children frolic near the legs of each of the goddess. Brahmāṇī stands in *samabhaṅga*. The postures echo Elephanta Mātṛkās, yet the oddity of posture, particularly the legs placed widely apart is unaesthetic. The Cāmuṇḍā keeps two of her hands in *uromaṇḍalī-hasta* and appears to be holding something which is difficult to identify. The posture is similar to Gajāsurasaṁharamūrti of Śiva.

Though the Cave No. 22 Mātṛkā group at Ellora (*Pls.* 121 to 123), indicates certain new iconographical traits, it is in general conformity with the conventions of earlier images. This group of Mātṛkās are located in the side shrine on the southern side of the dilapidated *nandī-maṇḍapa.*[48] The mutilated image of Śiva (*Pl.* 121) at the right end on the east wall is apparently in his *vīṇādhara* form, similar to Cave No. 21 (*Pl.* 116). Brahmāṇī has three faces and is seated in *padmāsana* and Vārāhī has boar's face, which are fresh elements at Ellora (*Pl.* 122). Another new element, though also seen in Cave No. 16-B is the emaciated form of Cāmuṇḍā. She carries a skull cup in the lower right hand. Facing Śiva on the western wall is Gaṇeśa. The image of Kāla follows (*Pl.* 123). The emaciated two-handed deity is seated in *garuḍa sthānaka*. He has dishevelled hair. The *āyudha*s and *vāhana*s of the Mātṛkās are mostly worn-out. All the goddesses except Brahmāṇī, are represented with children, which is a convention common with Cave No. 21 and Cave No. 14.

The Genesis of South Indian Tradition : Deccan

Surprisingly the iconographical features opened with the Ravulaphadi Saptamātṛkā group, at Aihole, does not find its continuation in Deccan or in south India. Specifically, although the standing or dancing Mātṛkā types are not seen in these regions in the times that followed, these find their way to regions north of the Deccan, say in Rajasthan and central India. The later Cālukyan, Pallava, Pāṇḍyan and Cola Mātṛkā images are always depicted as seated, and their import as cult icons, with certain frontal and formal bearing gradually grow and become standardized through seventh to ninth centuries AD.

A set of seventh-century Mātṛkās in the company of Śiva, and Gaṇeśa are preserved in the *parivāra* shrine on the south-east of the Bāla Brahma temple at Alampur (*Pls.* 124 to 128). In terms of iconographical peculiarities, certain parallelisms with the contemporary Mātṛkās sculptures of central India can be noticed. All the goddesses are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* on their respective *vāhana*s. One significant departure from the north Indian counterparts is that the goddesses are shown here without the children. In fact, this convention has persistence throughout the later south Indian tradition.

The icon of Śiva accompanying the Mātṛkā group at the Bāla Brahma temple is his *vīṇādhara* form (*Pl.* 124). He too is seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* directly on the Nandī-*vāhana,* like the goddesses. The upper right and left hands hold a *triśūla* and a flower, respectively. A cobra is seen emerging behind the head. Brahmāṇī is three-headed and wears *jaṭājūṭa,* and is devoid of any ornaments (*Pl.* 125). In the four hands she holds a *bījapūraka*, an *akṣamālā* and, a *pustaka* in the lower right, upper right and upper left hands respectively. The object in the lower left hand is indistinct. Her *haṁsa vāhana* has worn out. Maheśvarī's *jaṭājūṭa* is decorated with jewels. She too has Nandī as her *vāhana*. The upper left and lower right hands hold a *triśūla* and a *bījapūraka.* The other attributes are indistinct. Two-handed Kaumārī is seated on a peacock (*Pl.* 126). She carries a *śakti* and a *bījapūraka* in the left and right hands. Her hair in *jaṭājūṭa* style is decorated with jewels. The four-handed Vaiṣṇavī is seated on a *gaṇa*-like Garuḍa. Her *dhammila* type of hairdo is highly ornate. The goddess holds a *bījapūraka*, a *cakra* and a *śaṅkha* in the lower right, upper right and upper left hands. Vārāhī is four-handed and has a very prominent boar face (*Pl.* 127). She holds a sword, a *bījapūraka* and a shield, in the lower right, upper right and upper left hands. She as well as Aindrī do not have any *vāhana.*

Wearing *kirīṭamukuṭa*, Aindrī is also two-handed and holds *vajra* in the right hand. Cāmuṇḍā with dishevelled hair, popping eyes and open mouth with protruding fangs impart a terrifying look, yet her body is not emaciated (*Pl.* 128). She also wears a *muṇḍamālā*. Of the four hands, the upper right and lower right carry a *triśūla* and a skull cup, while the lower right hand holds a sword; the object in the upper left hand is mutilated. She has a dog (?) as her *vāhana*. Gaṇeśa too is four-handed and holds an *akṣamālā* and an *aṅkuśa* in the upper right and left hands. The objects held in the lower hands are indistinct.

According to Rajendra Prasad the sculpture of Bāla Brahma temple reveal the dominant traits of Alampur style.[49] This group of Saptamātṛkās display superior workmanship compared to the loose Mātṛkā sculptures found in the Arka Brahma temple.[50]

The Saptamātṛkā group from Prodduturi (Ramesvaram, A.P.) in the Ramaliṅgeśvara temple compound, is carved in low relief (*Pls.* 129 to 132). The unique formal and stylistic elements of the sculpture do not enable a precise dating, since the archaic quality in them is deceptive. Contrary to their stylistic status they show evolved iconographical features. Though frontally presented with less concern for naturalness in movement and volume, their bold linearity however conforms to the elements of classical tradition. It is possible that the shallow carving of sculpture is due to hasty work by sculptors of lesser skills, or alternatively might be due to the limitations of the material used. Looking at the sculptures iconographically, the group is assignable to seventh century AD.

The image of Śiva accompanying the Mātṛkās of Prodduturi is two-handed. He holds a *paraśu* in the right hand, which is the only positive identification mark. The other hand does not carry any object. While Śiva is seated in *padmāsana* the goddesses are seated in *vaiśākha sthānaka* on their respective *vāhana*s, as if they are riding on them. The animal mounts are depicted frontally. Brahmāṇī is three-headed and two-handed (*Pl.* 129). Her vehicle is a swan. In the unbroken left hand she holds *akṣamālā*. The four-handed Maheśvarī is seated on her bull vehicle (*Pl.* 130). In the upper right and left hands she holds a *triśūla* and a *ḍamaru*. In the lower left hand she carries a sickle. The lower right hand is kept akimbo. Vaiṣṇavī is two-handed (which is unusual) and is seated on Garuḍa, who has bird-like head and wings over a human torso (*Pl.* 130). She holds a *śaṅkha* and *cakra* in the left and right hands. The two-handed Kaumārī is seated on a peacock (*Pl.* 131). She holds a *śakti* in the left hand. Vārāhī is boar-faced (*Pl.* 131). She is seated on a long necked bird which also is an unusual feature. She holds a *śaṅkha* in the left hand. The two-handed Aindrī is seated on an elephant and holds a *vajra* in the left hand (*Pl.* 132). The four-handed Cāmuṇḍā has sunken belly, and pendant breasts, but the other parts of her physiognomy are normal (*Pl.* 132). Her *vāhana* is an owl. In the lower right and upper right she holds a *triśūla* and a cup respectively. The object in the upper left hand seems to be a flag or a *cāmara*. The object in the lower left hand is indistinct.

The six fragmentary busts of Mātrkās said to have originated from Galaganātha temple near the river, at Aihole are housed in the site museum (*Pl.* 133). This group has recently been dated to *ca*. eighth century AD and is considered as a product of Rastrakuta patronage.[51] Actually, the date could as well be earlier. From the available fragments it can be imagined that the figures when intact were of large dimensions. The *āyudha*s and *vāhana*s are not preserved and hence the possibilities of identification are limited. On the basis of certain other features a couple of goddesses can be distinguished. The fragment having a *candrakalā* and a skull on the *mukuṭa* can be identified as Maheśvarī (*Pl.* 134). Further, the figure also has a third eye on the forehead. Cāmuṇḍā can also be identified on the basis of emaciated body and protruding fangs from the mouth. Carol Bolon notices that, though the faces of the six mothers are worn-out, each one had an individual expression.[52]

A recently unearthed female figure from a nearby field on the south-west of Aihole village has been identified by Bolon as a seventh member of this set of Mātṛkās.[53] The figure is better preserved with the legs and the seated position distinctly discernible. This figure too has a *candrakalā* in the hair and Bolon identifies the figure as Pārvatī.[54] Though comparable in many ways with the aforesaid group of Mātṛkās, in terms of dimension, ornaments, etc., the sculpture has one distinctness which defies it being a part of the above. The lotus petalled round halo of this figure is different from the same motif common to the other six Mātṛkās.

The images of seven Mātṛkās and Śiva, carved on independent stone blocks, located within the precincts of the Kapoteśvara temple at Chezerla (Guntur, A.P.), although highly worn-out, are yet very important for the study of the development of Mātṛkā iconography in south India (*Pls.* 135 to 138). It is in this group of images, that we can specifically trace the prototype of the Pallava and Cola iconic traditions. The sculptural group is dated to *ca*. seventh century AD. All the deities are four-armed, and except Vārāhī and Śiva, all the other deities are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana*. It is especially noteworthy that the images do not have *vāhana*s and children accompanying the Mātṛkās. The last feature is also noticed in the Mātrkā sets from Alampur (*Pls*. 124 to 128) and Prodduturi (*Pls*. 129 to 132).

The Śiva's right leg crosses over the pendent left leg; it is significant that this posture is commonly seen in the Dakṣiṇāmūrti form of the deity in south India. Among the attributes in the four hands, only the *paraśu* which is held in the upper right hand is discernible (*Pl.* 135). Brahmāṇī is three-headed, but the emblems have worn off (*Pl.* 136). Maheśvarī holds a *triśūla* and a *paraśu* in the upper right and left hands. Vaiṣṇavī holds a *śaṅkha* in the upper left hand and the lower right is held in *abhaya-mudrā*. The image of Kaumārī is badly worn-out and hence no iconographical reading is possible. Vārāhī's boar face is presented in profile (*Pl.* 137). She is seated in *mahārājalīlāsana,* seen commonly in the representation of Kālī during Cola period. In the upper right hand she holds a *khaṭvāṅga*. Aindrī wears a crown and holds a *vajra* and a *khadga*. Cāmuṇḍā's image is larger than the other Mātrkās and is not emaciated (*Pl.* 138). The fangs protrude from the parted lips and she has pendant breasts. In the upper right and left hands, she holds a *triśūla* and a skull cup. The lower right hand appears to have been showing *sūcī-mudrā*.

The Early South Indian Tradition

Historically, it is after the military campaigns of Cālukyan king Pulakeśin II (AD 608-58) against Pallavas and the extension of his territory eastward, reaching the Bay of Bengal, that Mātṛkā icons appear to have become popular in these regions. According to K.R. Srinivasan, "It would appear that this cult, with a fixed number and definite iconography, as found in the early Cālukyan examples, migrated from the Cālukyan countries to Orissa on the north cost and the Pāṇḍyan and Pallava countries in the south and east of their territories".[55] However, it may be noted that there are differences of opinion among scholars regarding the exact time of the appearance of the Saptamātṛkā cult and images in Tamil Nadu. M. Arunachalam dates the origin of the cult in south India to second-third century BC.[56] Such an early dating is based on the reference to the Saptamātṛkās in *Śilappadikaram*. In the *Maduraikāṇḍam* of the epic, when the heroine Kannagi, enraged at the murder of her husband, assumed terrifying from and appeared at the city gate in order to question the atrocious act of the king, the *dvārapālaka*, looking at the horrifying figure, wonders whether she is, or not, the goddess of victory Korravai (or Durgā). He also considers the possibility whether she is Pitari (i.e., Cāmuṇḍā), the one who is the younger sister of the six virgins (*āruvarkkilaiya-nangai*).[57] Although the date of *Śilappadikaram* is much disputed,[58] the latest of these dates is AD 600 and thus the evidence point out a period prior to seventh century AD.

During the Pallava period we do not find any inscriptional evidence regarding the cult.[59] There is a general agreement among the scholars that the earliest available Saptamātṛkā representation hail from Kailāśanātha temple at Kanchipuram, which is datable to *c*. AD 720.[60] Yet, there have also been attempts to date some of the Mātṛkās sculptures to the late seventh century based on stylistic considerations.[61] It is quite reasonable to believe that the tradition of Saptamātṛkās might have existed in Tondaimandalam from ancient times, and might also have been also represented in perishable material. However, as per our present knowledge their lithic representation post-dates Cālukyan prototypes.

A point which would be pertinent to be added in this context is concerning the folk tradition of *Sapta Kannimārs* or of the seven virgins in Tamil Nadu, whose images are made even today in terracotta for worship.[62] Like many other Indian folk traditions, in this case too, it is difficult to exactly pin-point the historical antiquity and origin of these *grāma-devatā*s. But it can be speculated that these goddess were worshipped much before the incoming of the neo-Brāhmanical Saptamātṛkās. The reference to them as virgins (*nangai*) in *Śilappadikaram* positively suggest their non-Brāhmanical origin. More specifically, in *Śilappadikaram* the seven goddesses are not mentioned as *Deva Śakti*s in association with Śiva, Gaṇeśa or Kārttikeya.[63]

The rock-cut caves of the early Pallava times do not contain Mātṛkā sculptures.[64] The Mātṛkā group in the Kailāśanātha temple at Kanchipuram (*Pl.* 140) is dated to *ca*. AD 720.[65] They are found between the cells 21 and 22 of the cloister wall. The iconographic details are obscured by the thick plaster applied over the images. However, certain details can still be made out.

Gaṇeśa and Śiva are presented together at the beginning of the group, facing west, towards the rest of the group. The Mātṛkās are represented facing north, towards the main shrine.[66] Gaṇeśa and Śiva are four- and two-handed respectively. The *jaṭādhārī* Śiva wears a *yōgapaṭa* and holds a sword in the left hand, as he imparts blessing with his right hand. The seven goddesses are seated on a common raised pedestal, similar to the example in Cave No. 21 at Ellora. However, on the seats *vāhana*s are not represented. Except Aindrī, all other goddesses are four-handed. Brahmāṇī has three faces and holds an *akṣamālā* and a *kamaṇḍalu*. Maheśvarī carries a *śūla* and *pāśa*. The emblems of Kaumārī are not clear. Vaiṣṇavī's emblems, *śaṅkha* and *cakra* are shown on either sides of the head. Vārāhī has a face of a boar. Her emblems too, are indistinct. Aindrī's weapon *vajra* is seen on the right side of her *mukuṭa*. Cāmuṇḍā has a normal body and holds a *triśūla*, a dagger and a *kapāla* in the lower right, upper left and upper right hands respectively. Her lower left hand display *sūcī-mudrā*.

The above Saptamātṛkā images do not forecast the convention of the monotonous frontality that is to takeover the later Saptamātṛkā icons in south India. The goddesses are seated in varied postures and their limbs are disposed in distinctive positions. A unique feature of this panel are the parasols placed above the heads of the deities. It is pertinent to note that, on the left western wall of the niche, is the image of the eight-handed Kālī, which may be suggestive of the textual description that the Saptamātṛkās as the emanatory forms of the great goddess herself.

Though traces of Saptamātṛkā temples are found from Pallava period, the original structures do not exist at present. P. Shanmugam opines that the oldest of such temples may be identified at Alampakkam (Tiruchirappali). The original *vimāna* built by the Pallava king Dantivarman does not exist now; the existing structure consists of the renovations done during the time of Āditya-I.[67] However, it can be observed that once the cult pattern of Mātṛkās was settled, from *ca.* eighth to twelfth centuries the sculptures proliferated, either as part of the iconographic programme of Śaivaite temples and as images in independent shrines. In the Śaivaite temples Saptamātṛkās appear as *parivāra dēvatā*s on the south side of the temple. In terms of their compositional peculiarities, they are seen as carved from independent stone blocks. These await discussions in the chapter to follow.

Iconographical Summary

Looking back in retrospect, it becomes evident that the Mātṛkā iconography in different regions achieved a certain standardized system of representational code during the sixth and seventh centuries. The early stage of emerging iconography, with distinct typologies of militant and motherly personalities, merge by the early sixth century, leading to the formation of the essential iconographic codes; *āyudha*s, *vāhana*s and other specificities of defining the personality of a particular goddesses. The experimentation during the transitional phase being over by the mid-sixth century, [refer sculptures from Jagat, Samalaji (group-B), Deogarh, Muṇḍeśvarī, Nand-Chand (group-A) etc.], during the second half of sixth and seventh centuries the development towards standardization and elaboration took place, which had been the point of concentration for the present chapter. This process is characterized by the incorporation of fresh iconographical details for each of the goddesses, depending on the particular regional conventions, or through inter-regional adaptations.

Though Śiva is an essential component in the Mātṛkā iconography from the earliest examples, the *vīṇādhara* form achieves a greater popularity over Vīrabhadra in central and western India. The diffusion of this iconography from central India to other regions could be proposed. Such a proposition is supported by evidence, since chronologically the Deogarh Mātṛkā groups are possibly earlier than the Amjhara (group-A and B), Samalaji (group-D) and Kotesvar ones. Further, the tradition also finds it way to Ellora (Cave No. 21) and Bāla Brahma temple (Alampur). However, the eastern Indian and south Indian traditions do not conform to this. As in the case of Ellora Cave No. 14 and Chezerla, the Dakṣiṇāmūrti form of Śiva is preferred to Vīrabhadra, Vīṇādhara, or Naṭarāja forms, and south India in general appears to follow this tradition. In the examples from Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole and in Mandor example, Śiva as Naṭarāja occupies the central position among the Mātṛkā group, which, as such, finds it continuation only in the medieval western Indian temples.

It is also observed that in certain examples starting with Ravulaphadi cave the dominant presence of Śiva is further enhanced by his Kālabhairava form among Mātṛkās. Such an instance is predominant at Ellora, followed at Mataria in Gujarat. In western India and Ellora the tradition continued in the following centuries.

During this period the shift from Kārttikeya to Gaṇeśa, as an accompanying deity of Mātṛkās has been finally established. The exception to this is noticed in the cases at Dhank and Kota group of Mātṛkās.[68] While at Mandor, Gaṇeśa occupies the place at the beginning of the group, at Ellora, invariably, the deity is located at the end of the row of Mātṛkās. The former tradition finds it continuation in the medieval temples of western India.[69] The latter convention appears to be the widely accepted practice, though, this cannot be of course confirmed conclusively, since most of the sculptures discussed in the chapter are those which remain removed from their original locations. Iconography of the deity, follows a more or less standard code, with minor variations, such as the number of hands, and postures.

The iconographical innovations of the independent goddesses, during the period, is significant. Three-headed Brahmāṇī has a wide distribution. (It may be noted that instead of actual four heads of Brahmāṇī, in the relief portrayals, only three heads can be shown.) Starting with Naharghati (Deogarh) and Ravulaphadi cave (Aihole), the tradition is also found in Gujarat (Samalaji-D and Kotesvar), Alampur (Bāla Brahma Temple), Pachar (Bihar) Orissa (Paraśurāmeśvara temple) and in the later south Indian examples. The *mṛgacarma* as an attribute too has a wide distribution, which appears to prevalent only during the period under consideration. Such instances are noticed at Muṇḍeśvarī (Bihar) and in western India at Amjhara (group-B). Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī and Aindrī have more or less consistent iconographic traits. The iconography of Vārāhī finds a lot of variation in the hands of different guilds, but appear as if in the process of getting standardized. Beginning as an extra head at

Naharghati (Deogarh), the boar head of the goddess finds wide prevalence. However at Ellora (Cave No. 14 and 21) she has a normal human head, but in these cases her *vāhana* is a boar. Since the upper parts are broken, and since the *vāhana* in the case of Samalaji (group-C) and Amjhara (group-B) is also the boar, it would be logical to consider that these images might also have had human faces. Further, this possibility is supported by the example at Mataria. When the goddess is represented with the head of a boar, the accompanying *vāhana* displays a great variety, such as, *nāga*s (Kotesvar), a human being (Mt. Abu, Saraikela and Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhubanesvar), a bird (Prodduturi); or in certain cases, the deity is without any *vāhana* (Bāla Brahma temple, Alampur). The physical features of the goddess also vary between a normal, beautiful type [Samalaji (group-C), Amjhara (group-B), Kotesvar, Mataria, Ellora (Caves Nos. 14, 21 and 22), Bāla Brahma temple (Alampur), Prodduturi, Chezerla and Kailāsanātha temple (Kanchipuram], and an uncouth, pot-bellied type at Vindhyachal, the images at Bharat Kala Bhavan, Saraikela and Paraśurāmeśvara temple (Bhubanesvar).

Such a variation in iconography is also noticed in the case of Cāmuṇḍā. Among the two distinct variations, the more widely prevalent during sixth-seventh centuries is the emaciated type (found in central, western and eastern India). The early Ellora (Cave Nos. 14 and 21) and the south Indian tradition [Kailāśanātha temple (Kanchipuram), and the later examples] represent her as having beautiful body. In western India the change-over from the earlier robust, uncouth and malevolent type to the emaciated type takes place during the mid-sixth century at Samalaji (group-C), Amjhara (group-A), etc. This could be considered as an influence from central India (Deogarh). The *vāhana* of Cāmuṇḍā also shows wide variety. These are, a lioness at Samalaji (group-C), a hyena at Amjhara (group-A) a human corpse at Kotesvar, Mt. Abu and Pachar, an owl at Ellora (Cave No. 4), Prodduturi, Paraśurāmeśvara temple (Bhubanesvar), Saraikela and a dog at Bāla Brahma temple (Alampur). This indicates that no particular pattern or consistent preference was followed for a particular animal in any region. However, in eastern India the preference predominantly seems to have been an owl. Things held in the hands of Cāmuṇḍā (*triśūla, khaṭvāṅga, muṇḍa*, skull-cup, etc.) are more or less homogeneous, the only exception seem to be at Ellora (Cave Nos.14 and 21), where she too fondles a child, like the other Mātṛkās, which is quite an unexpected feature. Among the essential ornamentation the *muṇḍamālā* and *jaṭā* are the widely accepted features.

Iconographically, Cāmuṇḍā, Kālabhairava and Kālī have similarity, for they represent the *ugra* aspect; the dark, malevolent concept of the divinity. It may be noticed that Kālabhairava images accompany three of the Ellora Mātṛkā groups, and the groups in north Gujarat (Mataria and certain other later examples), which point out the prevalence of the idea in Western India. Visually, the awe-inspiring conception of Kālabhairava and Kālī imparts a greater impact compared to that of the emaciated form of Cāmuṇḍā. This is due to the formal and iconographical elaborations that the sculptors had exercised upon the earlier emaciated Cāmuṇḍā image type invented at Badoh-Pathari and Deogarh. At Ellora, generally such elaboration was done due to the large wall space that was available in these caves, but, even while working within the constriction of the stone blocks (say, at Mataria) the creative use of the space has enabled the most expressive results.

The presence of certain otherwise not popular goddess, such as Vāyavī(?) [Samalaji (group-C), Amjhara (group-B) and Mataria]; and Aṁbikā(?) (Mataria), awaits further study. At this stage it can be pointed out that the former also finds its way into the later group of Mātṛkās at Karvan (south Gujarat), which awaits a discussion in the chapter to follow.

A certain elaboration in the number of hands of some of the goddesses during the period under consideration is noteworthy. In the initial stage during fifth and early sixth centuries all the goddesses are two-handed. It is Cāmuṇḍā who receives the additional hands, earliest [Deogarh, Samalaji (group-A, Tanesara), followed by Brahmāṇī (Tintoi,Kotesvar, Mandor etc.]. Other goddesses; Vaiṣṇavī, Kaumārī, Aindrī and Vārāhī, too receive four hands during the period under discussion, but in each of these cases the choice for more than the normal two hands is inconsistent, and hence it is difficult to construct an evolutionary pattern of this part of the iconography. However, at Ellora, invariably in all the sets of Mātṛkās, all the goddesses have multiple hands. The need for the incorporation of the additional hands can be understood in terms of functional necessity (unlike that of Cāmuṇḍā, though in exceptional examples she too holds a child, as in Saraikela, and Ellora Cave Nos. 14 and 21), since it enabled the respective goddesses to handle the children with two hands while allowing the extra hands to wield the respective weapons; a perfect conflation of motherly and militant functions. Wherever the children, as a component in the iconography is excluded [Bāla Brahma temple (Alampur) and Paraśurāmeśvara temple (Bhubanesvar)] the *bījapūraka* fruit symbolizing fertility, is substituted. The south Indian tradition starting with the images at Kapoteśvara temple, however, exclude this aspect totally and instead adopt certain *mudrās*, adding-up greatly to their import as icons. Whereas, when children are present there comes to exist an inter-subjectivity in the icons between the mother and child, breaking the monotonous frontal bearing, and impersonal closedness. The last point awaits further interpretation in the final chapter.

References

1. (a) U.P. Shah, "Sculptures from Samalaji and Roda", in *BBMPG*, XIII, special issue, 1960, p. 58, recognized that Maheśvarī, Vāyavī (what Shah identified as Āgneyī), Aindrī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā as belonging to a single group.

   (b) Sara L. Schastok, *The Samalaji Sculptures and 6th Century Art in Western India*, Leiden, 1985, p. 7, fig. 4 to 11, in addition to above, includes the images of, Śiva and Gaṇeśa in this group.
2. Sara L. Schastok, *ibid.*, dated this group to *ca.* AD 525.
3. R.C. Agrawala, "Some More Unpublished Sculptures from Rajasthan", in *LK*, 10, 1961, pp. 175-84, Fig. 1.
4. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.*, 1985, Fig. 62.
5. *Ibid.*, Figs. 62, 63, 72, 73, 74, p. 80, she does not consider the first two as part of the others, yet dates the sculptures to *ca.* AD 530.

6. (a) R.C. Agrawala, "Some Unpublished Sculptures from South-Western Rajasthan", in *LK,* 6, 1959, Fig. 20, identified the figure as Kaumārī.

   (b) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, Figs. 66 to 71, identified the figure as Brahmāṇī, but opines that perhaps this sculpture does not belong to this group. There is a very close stylistic proximity between these figures and hence are to be considered as belonging to one group.

7. Ratan Parimoo, "Some Thoughts on the Sculptures of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu", in *Vaisṇavism in Indian Art and Culture*, ed. by Ratan Parimoo, New Delhi, 1987, p. 355, maintains that this posture is neither crouching nor *uttānapāda*, i.e., legs bent at the knees which are raised, but are properly and comfortably seated.

8. R.C. Agrawala, "More Sculptures from Amjhara, Rajasthan", in *AA*, XII, 1965, pp. 176-77, Figs.1, 2, 3 published Aindrī, Vārāhī and Maheśvarī.

9. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, ascribes, *ca.* AD 530 date to this group.

10. V.H. Sonawane, "Mātṛkā sculptures from Mataria and Ardhanārīśvara from Tarsang (Panchamahals)", in *JISOA,* New Series, Vol. IX, Dr. Moti Chandra Commemoration Volume, part II, pp. 42-49, and plates.

11. (a) R.C. Agrawala, "A unique Mātṛkā Relief from Rajasthan", in *JBRS,* XLIII, March-June, 1957, Part I & II, pp. 111-14 mentions that below to one side of the relief, in the rock-cut step-well, an inscription is noticed, dated to *Vikrama samvata* 742 (AD 685). Author mentions that perhaps the images of Mātṛkās hewn out at the time of the opening ceremony of this step-well. However, in a later article ("Mother and Child Sculptures from Samalaji and Rajasthan", in *BBMPG*, vol. XXIII, 1971.) the scholar assigns early seventh century date, for this relief, probably on the basis of stylistic considerations.

    (b) Joanna G. Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, New Jersy, 1982, pp. 173-74, Fig. 265, mentions that the bearing of the inscription on the images is moot, and ascribes a date between AD 600-650.

12. Michael W. Meister, "Regional Variations in Mātṛkā Conventions", in *ABA*, Vol. XLVII, after analyzing the organization and placement of Mātṛkā groups in medieval temples deduces that in central India Śiva and Gaṇeśa frames the goddesses on the left and right respectively, and temples of western India ('Marudeśa') instead, presents Gaṇeśa on the left and Śiva in the middle of the group.

13. Earlier to this group are the sculptures from Totu (Sabarkantha, near Bayad, north Gujarat), which are possibly not published till date. A.I.I.S., Varanasi, photo documentation mentions photo documentation of these by Gujarat Department of Archaeology (neg. no. G.D.A. 7 to 15). Some other sculptures from Totu are published. ***See***, R.T. Savalia, *Gujarat ni Hindu Deviōnu Pratimā Vidhāna* (Gujarati), Fig. 19 is Mahiṣāsuramardinī image from Totu. ***See also***, Ravi Hajarnis, ***Pathik***, (Diwali edition), Oct.-Nov. 1991, pp. 63-64, published Gaṇeśa from Totu.

14. Joanna G. Williams, *op.cit.*, 1982.

15. For further details refer, Michael Meister, *ABA*, *op.cit*.

16. Joanna G. Williams, *op.cit.*, 1982. "The figure type is still relatively heavy, and the legs are not repetitively splayed . . . . Thus these figures are fully abreast of general early medieval stylistic developments.

17. As per the A.I.I.S. documentation these figures are dated to *ca*. seventh century AD.

18. ***See*** reference no. 7.

19. U.P. Shah, "Mātṛkā Sculptures from North Gujarat", in *BBMPG*, Baroda, Vol. XIV, 1962, describes Vaiṣṇavī, Aindrī, Brahmāṇī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍā and Gaṇeśa.
20. (a) U.P. Shah, *op.cit.*, 1960, Figs. 6, 7, and 8, p. 118.
    (b) U.P. Shah, "Some Early sculptures from Abu and Bhinmal", in *BBMPG*, Vol. XII, 1955-56, p. 44 and plates. Assigns a date between *ca.* AD 600-700.
21. Satyendra Patnaik, *Brāhmanical Religion in Ancient Orissa*, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 146-49, refers to various copper plate inscriptions belonging to sixth-seventh centuries as the earliest records of *Śakti* cult in this region.
22. D.C. Sircar, *The Śākta Pīṭhas*, Delhi, 1973, pp. 17-24.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
24. K.R. Srinivasan, "Some Aspects of Religion as Revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South", in *Journal of the Madras University*, XXXII, no. 1, July 1960, pp. 154-55.
25. U.P. Shah, "Lakulīśa : Śaivaite Saint", in *Discourses on Śiva*, ed. by Michael W. Meister, Philadelphia, 1984, pp. 92-102 and plates.
26. Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India — 300-800*, Delhi, 1980, p. 91.
27. P.L. Gupta, *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*, Patna Museum, 1965, pp. 93-95.
28. U.P. Shah and P.L. Gupta, "Sculptures from Saraikela in the Patna Museum", in *JOI*, Baroda, XVIII, p. 153.
29. Frederick M. Asher, *op. cit*, 1980, p. 60.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 91, further observes that the broad, planar surfaces of the figures, generally more modeled than the flattened style observed in parts of the Gaṅgā Valley at this time, recall contemporary images from parts of Orissa, for example, the sculptures of the Vital Deul at Bhubanesvar and the contemporary temples of Mukhaliṅgam.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 90, Pl. 108, mentions that the goat-headed Dakṣa as replacing Gaṇeśa in this Mātṛkā group.
32. U.P. Shah, *op.cit., JOI*, XVIII, p. 156.
33. Gautam Sengupta, *Eastern Indian Sculpture : A study in Style and Technique, ca. 4th-7th centuries AD*, Ph.D.thesis, University of Calcutta, 1983, p. 231. Saraikela images are assigned to seventh century AD and the Pachar images to an earlier date. Such an early dating of Pachar is based on the crude execution, sparse ornamentation and plain circular halos.
34. K.R. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains of Bhubanesvar*, Bombay, 1961, p. 28.
35. K.V. Soundara Rajan, "Some Iconographic Elements of Pre-Medieval Temples", in *LK*, no. 8, 1960. p. 22.
36. James Ferguson and James Burgess, *The Cave Temples of India, Delhi*, 1969, (first published in 1880), p. 22.
37. Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.*,1985, p. 62, mentions all these points and proposes that Cave No. 14 Saptamātṛkās as emanations of Devī in the spirit of *Devī-Māhātmya*.
38. *Varāha Purāṇa* account is summarized by T.A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, pt. II, pp. 382-83.
39. *Devī-Māhātmya*, VIII.57.
40. (a) Walter Spink, "Ajanta to Ellora", in *Mārg*, March 1967, p. 5-6, ascribes AD 558-570 as the date for Cave No. 21 and Cave No. 14 is dated to AD 561-621.
    (b) Soundara Rajan, *op.cit.*, 1981, p. III, considers that Cave No. 21 Mātṛkās as the

earliest at Ellora, and cave No. 14 figures as influenced by Cave No. 21.

(c) Soundara Rajan, *Ellora Caves, Sculptures and Architecture — An Art Historical Re-appraisal*, keynote address, U.G.C. National Seminar on Ellora Caves, Nov. 1985. Published in *Ellora Caves : Sculptures and Architecture*, ed. by Ratan Parimoo, New Delhi, 1988, points out, Cave No. 21 as belonging to the first quarter of the seventh century AD and Cave No. 14 as belonging to the mid-seventh century AD.

(d) Carmel Berkson, "An Approach Towards Examining Style in the Cave Temples", in *Rūpa Pratirūpa,* Alice Boner Commemoration Volume, ed. by Bettina Baumer, New Delhi, 1982, opines that Cave No. 14 has been carved somewhat later than Cave No. 21.

(e) Sara L. Schastok, *op.cit.,* 1985, ascribes second half of sixth century for Cave No. 21 and seventh century for Cave No. 14. However, I am inclined to consider an early date for Cave No. 14 compared to Cave No. 21.

41. Kirit Mankodi, Śiva Panels of Ellora and Elephanta : Yōgīśvara or Dakṣiṇāmūrti (?) Paper presented at the U.G.C. National Seminar on Ellora, Nov. 1985, published in *Ellora Caves : Sculptures and Architecture*, ed. by Ratan Parimoo, New Delhi, 1988, argues that some of the Ellora and Elephanta images of Śiva which are identified generally as Yogīśvara could be the Dakṣiṇāmūrti form of Śiva. The *vitarka mudrā* and the seated position in the sculptures under consideration could be taken for such a possibility.

42. *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa,* as quoted by T.A.G. Rao, *op.cit.,* I, pt. II, p. 384.

43. B.N. Sharma, "Cāmuṇḍā on Owl", in *JOI,* M.S. University of Baroda vol.XXVI, Sept. 1975, No.1, gives many instances of Cāmuṇḍā on owl from North India and points out the reference in the *Pūrvakarṇāgama,* confirming such a tradition. The author refers to Gopinatha Rao, *EHI,* 1968, I, II, Appendix C, p. 152.

44. K.V. Soundara Rajan, "The Significance of the Śiva Naṭarāja Iconic Tradition", in *JISOA,* New Series, Vol. V, 1972-73, pp. 76-85 : compared to the Cola Naṭarāja images which display *saumya* aspect, the earlier icons of dancing Śiva are terror-striking type, highlighted by multiple use of weapons like axe, *khaṭvāṅga, śūla, nāga, ghaṇṭa,* etc., which brings forth primarily the *tāmasika* aspect of the deity which has its bearing upon *tāmasika* Rudra-Lakulīśa, Pāśupata-Maheśvara cults, which were prevalent in the pre-medieval times.

45. (a) K.V Soundara Rajan, *op.cit.,* 1981, Plate No. LXXXVI, B, mentions close stylistic affinity with their counterparts at Ellora and suggest an evolution therefrom.

(b) Gary Tarr, "The Śiva Cave Temple of Dhokesvara", in *Oriental Arts,* Vol. XI, No. 4 Winter 1969, Fig. 8, p. 10 dates the cave to *ca.* AD 570.

46. Gary Tarr, *ibid.*, p. 5 suggest that this may be due to the influence from the Mātrkā panel at Ravulaphadi cave at Aihole.

47. Gray Tarr, *ibid.*, p. 4 "The nexus particularly being notably distinguished by the fact that the positioning and the stance of the *mātṛs* introduces a pleasing variegation, so characteristically seen for example at Ramesvaram at Ellora".

48. Soundara Rajan, *op.cit.,* 1981, Pl. LXXVII, pp. 157-58, points out that this cave is a late effort, more germane to Rāṣṭrakūṭa conception, architecturally and iconographically. "The concept of an *aṣṭaparivāra* unit is in embryonic form here with central Śiva Shrine, Gaṇeśa and Skanda on the *ardhamaṇḍapa* niches, sub-shrine for Brahmā and Viṣṇu flanking the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* and Saptamātṛkā and other shrines just outside the main excavation but integral with it".

49. B. Rajendra Prasad, *Chalukyan Temples of Andhradesa,* Delhi, 1983, p. 85.

50. Aswin Lippe, "Early Chalukyan Icons", in *ABA*, Vol. XXXIV, 4, pp. 276-77, Figs. 6 and 7.
51. Carol Radcliffe Bolon, "A late 8th century Mātṛkā set at Aihole", in *Dimensions of Indian Art,* Pupul Jayakar Seventy. Ed. by Lokesh Chandra and Jyotindra Jain, Delhi, 1986, pp. 51 to 55 and plates.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 53, notices that Māheśvarī is the most mature woman of the group and Kaumārī is glowing and quite young.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 54, this identification is done to solve the question of identity of the eighth figure. The question is resolved by considering the antecedence of the figure on the left of the dancing Śiva of the Ravulaphadi Saptamātṛkā group as Pārvatī. ***See*** R.S. Gupte (*The Art and Architecture of Aihole*, Bombay, 1967), and Michael Meister, (*op.cit.*, *ABA*, Vol. XLVII.)
55. K.R. Srinivasan, *Temples of South India,* Delhi, 1971, p. 156.
56. A. Arunachalam, "The Saptamātṛkā Cult", in *Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Cultures*, University of Madras, 1977, pp. 3-4.
57. Ilango Adigal, *Śilappadikaram, Maduraikāṇḍam, Varakkuraikatai*, 37-40. Malayalam translation by Nenmara P. Vishvanathan Nair, 1975, Trichur, p. 581.
58. (a) V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar (tr), *The Śilappadikaram,* London 1939, p. 359, dates the text to AD 174 on the basis of astronomical references.

    (b) Nilakantha Sastri, *A History of South India,* Oxford, 1986, pp. 87 and 117, suggests *ca.* AD 600 as the possible date.
59. C. R. Srinivasan, "Sapta Mātṛkās", in *JOI,* M.S. University of Baroda, Vol. XXIV, March-June, 1975, No. 3-4, p. 431.
60. (a) K.R. Srinivasan, "Some aspects of Religion as revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South", in *Journal of the Madras University,* XXXII, No. 1 July 1960, pp. 154-55.

    (b) C.R. Srinivasan, *op.cit.,* 1975, p. 431.

    (c) P. Shanmugam, "The Sapta Matri Cult During Cola Times", in *Srinidhih, K.R. Srinivasan Festschriff,* Madras, 1983, p. 257.
61. P. Shanmugam, *ibid.,* 1983, p. 259, reports that the Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department has discovered a Saptamātṛkā image at Kunrattur (Chinglepet Dist.), According to it, it may be the oldest image of Saptamātṛkā and it is assignable to *ca.* seventh century AD. Ref. *Kalvettu,* Vol. 14, p. 30, Published by the State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu (in Tamil).
62. Stella Kramrisch, *Unknown India : Ritual Art in Tribe and Village,* Philadelphia, 1968, p. 57.
63. It may be noted that immediately after this passage, it is mentioned that she (Kannagi) is not Bhadrakālī who made the Īśvara (Drivan i.e. Śiva) dance.
64. C.R. Srinivasan, *op.cit.,* 1975, p. 431.
65. K.R. Srinivasan, *op.cit.,* pp. 154-55, opines that the *prākara* wall constructed after the main temple by Mahendra Varman III, cannot be dated earlier than AD 720.
66. R. Nagaswamy, *Tāntric Cult of South India,* Delhi, 1982, p. 165.
67. P. Shanmugam, *op.cit.,* 1983, p. 33.
68. Katherine Harper, *op.cit*, 1989, p. 130, pl. 81.
69. Michael Meister, *op.cit.*

6

103052

Saptamātṛkā Icons-III

(eighth and ninth centuries AD)

THE question that we would be primarily addressing in the present chapter is whether, or not, there are any significant changes in the iconographic codes of the seven goddesses that fall within the purview of the defined time-frame. The inquiry considers the overall organization of the group as well as the cases of individual divinities therein.

The analytical deductions in the previous two chapters make it evident that the evolutionary process in iconography is not unilinear, (a neat, one to another progress model within a specific space-time continuum) propelling one particular set of representational code to another. On the contrary, the development could best be characterized as being based on shifts (or broken and ruptured innovations, within the possible permeables), with each new set of icons that were produced. However, the larger, overall pattern of changes in a pan-Indian and in the local context is significant and needs to be taken into consideration, since the totality of the shifts, allow us to perceive and interpret the individual options within the light of cultural meanings of a relatively homogeneous pan-Brāhmanical (and pan-Indian) religious ethos. Thus, the focus of the present chapter is the inquiry, as to whether there could be something in the icons that were made during the defined time frame that is significant for a comparison between regions and sites, and to proceed to an over all pattern of development, in comparison with the previous stations of iconographical innovations.

Discourses on Indian Art history have an already well established notion of 'stylistic evolution' with regard to sculpture, between Gupta classicism(s) and the medieval style(s). The period we are concerned ourselves with in this chapter is crucial, since it deals with the transition of post-Gupta regional styles (the lingering on of the 5-6th century styles into 7-8th centuries), towards the initial phase of early medieval regional styles. The question that we address regarding the iconography dovetails itself with the characterization of stylistic shifts and the inquiry inevitably involves defining these as a totality. This is done with an intention to see whether the stylistic change has any concomitant effect upon iconographic configurations and their meanings. The focus of present analysis considers the meaning of elaboration, both in iconographical and stylistic terms.

Medieval Elements Incubate : Western India

Stylistically, the three Mātṛkā images-Brahmāṇī, Kaumārī and Vārāhī, from Malagon (Sirohi, Rajasthan) can be ascribed a date of late seventh or early eighth century AD (*Pls.* 139 & 141). Considering the suggestion of stylistic regression in western India in the seated type of images during seventh century, (ref. discussions on the images from Dhank, Kotesvar and Mt. Abu), the Malagon Mātṛkās too exemplify frontality and a lack of inter-subjectivity between the mothers and the children. The Malagon images at the same time has greater three-dimensional feeling and a fine sense of surface finish, which possibly indicate a revival of the earlier classical values, which in fact could have never been lost. Hence, these sculptures link-up the last part of the section on western India (discussed in the previous chapter) and the following period, which awaits detailed consideration.

Brahmāṇī of Malagon is seated on a lotus seat in *lalitāsana* and has three faces and four hands (*Pl.* 139). A *haṁsa* is represented on the right side of her seat. In her upper right and upper left hands, she holds a *sruk* and a lotus respectively. The lower right hand is in *varada-mudrā* and a child, seated on the left thigh is supported with the lower left hand. Kaumārī and Vārāhī too are seated in *lalitāsana*. Seated on a peacock the two-handed goddess holds a *śakti* and a cock in the right and left hands. Vārāhī is four-handed and is seated on a buffalo (*Pl.* 141). She holds a *śaṅkha, gadā* and *cakra* in lower right, upper right and upper left hands. A child is held in the similar manner as Brahmāṇī.

The images of Mātṛkās — Maheśvarī and Aindrī from Devangan (Sirohi, Rajasthan) on the stylistic grounds can be dated to first half of eighth century AD (*Pls.* 142 & 143). Seated on a bull in *lalitāsana*, the goddess Maheśvarī holds a *triśūla* and a snake in the upper right and left hands (*Pl.* 142). The child held in the lower left hand is shown suckling. The two-handed Aindrī is seated on an elephant (*Pl.* 143). She too holds a child in the left hand. The right hand is mutilated.

The re-invention of earlier classical values in terms of naturalism in the postures is evident in Devangan images, (compare the postures with Amjhara-B or/and Mataria, *Pls.* 74 to 77 & 81 to 85). Yet, a certain heavy, stunted feeling of the form, together with large, rather disproportionate head and legs indicate the continuation of the earlier regressive trend. However the elaborate ornamentation and decorativeness suggest the early germinations of medieval qualities. Though largely the organic relationship of the body and the jewellery is preserved, a lot of decorative details, particularly the repetitive beaded strings and certain curved attenuation of the drapery is a definitive indication of the prospective medievalism.

A number of broken images of Mātṛkās, tentatively assigned as belonging to Modi (Mandsor, M.P.) are preserved in Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, Bhanpura.[1] They can be separated into two different sets on the basis of the similarity of postures and the details of ornamentations.

Considering the decorativeness, both the groups appear to belong to the middle of eighth century AD.

The first group comprises of dancing images of Śiva and Maheśvarī (*Pls.* 144 & 145). Positioned in *svastika-pāda*, the figure of Śiva is in *atibhaṅga* (*Pl.* 144). He is eight-handed. The normal right and left hands are held showing *nṛtta-hasta*s. The uppermost two hands are in *ūrdhvamaṇḍalī-hasta* and hold a snake horizontally. Apart from the *triśūla* held in one hand, the other *āyudha*s are mutilated. The bull *vāhana* stands behind the deity. Only the lower portion of the icon of Maheśvarī is preserved, identifiable due to the *vāhana* Nandī (*Pl.* 145). The part of the left palm that is preserved is held in *nṛtta-hasta* comparable to that of Śiva.

The broken and dispersed second group of Mātṛkās has survived with six identifiable images[2] (*Pls.* 146 to 149). Stylistically they are quite close to the first group. Frontally conceived, Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Vārāhī and Aindrī are seated in *lalitāsana*. Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī and Aindrī have their usual *vāhana*s. The lower right hand of Brahmāṇī holds an *akṣamālā* (*Pl.* 146). The image of Kaumārī is relatively better preserved (*Pl.* 147). Seated in *pralaṁbapāda,* a child is carved across the lap, though the head and part of lower left hand are now lost. The *āyudha* in the upper right hand is partially mutilated, but looks like a *śakti* and in the upper left hand she holds a flower. On the left side of the pedestal is a peacock. A very badly damaged torso of a Vaiṣṇavī image also belong to this group. The elaborate hair ornamentation of this image and that of Kaumārī are similar to each other. Vaiṣṇavī seems to have been a four-armed figure, and the *cakra* in the upper right hand is the only remaining identification mark. Vārāhī too holds a child in the lower left hand, and the upper right hand holds a *cakra* (*Pl.* 148). The boar head is carved in profile. Instead of any *vāhana*, a snake with human head and folded hands, near the left leg of the goddess suggest *pātala,* which is derivation from Nara-Varāha images, and similar to Kotesvar Vārāhī image (*Pl.* 92). The upper portion of the figure of Aindrī is lost. In the surviving portion of the left palm is an *aṅkuśa,* near to which, an elephant's head is also visible (*Pl.* 149).

A group of dancing Mātṛkās from Karvan (south Gujarat) include images of Śiva, Maheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, Vāyavī(?), Cāmuṇḍā and Kālabhairava (*Pls.* 150 to 159). In their present scattered condition at the site it is difficult to speculate on the original location and the number and original order of the Mātṛkās.[3] However, the available material point out certain iconographical peculiarities which are of interest. The sculpture of Brahmāṇī (or Kaumārī ?) is preserved only below the waist (*Pl.* 150). The image is in dancing posture depicting *sūcī-pāda* and *kṣipta* posture. A peacock is seen near the feet. In the image of Maheśvarī the lower left and the upper hands, the left leg, and the head are mutilated (*Pl.* 151). In the upper right and left hands she probably held a snake and a *triśūla*. The left leg is folded up in dancing posture. She is accompanied by her bull vehicle. The four-handed Aindrī is also damaged making it difficult to identify any of her attributes (*Pl.* 152). She is dancing in *catura* posture, in front of her elephant vehicle, with the left foot in *sūcī-pāda*. Similarly, the image of emaciated Cāmuṇḍā has lost the head and three hands (*Pl.* 153). Her lower right hand holds a sword, and is seen dancing over a human corpse in *catura* posture in *sūcī-pāda*. A *muṇḍamālā* and a necklace of snakes adorns the figure. The broken image of Vaiṣṇavī has Garuḍa as her vehicle. (*Pl.* 154). An interesting addition to this group is the image of Vāyavī(?), whose stag vehicle is clearly discernible (*Pl.* 155). The torso of Vārāhī with the missing head, is identifiable from the remaining broken portion (*Pl.* 156). The lower portion of a dancing figure with buffalo as *vāhana* in the Sindhvai Mātā temple, most probably belongs to this Vārāhī image (*Pl.* 157). The figure of the emaciated Kālabhairava too is in mutilated condition (*Pl.* 159). His head and *āyudha*s are lost but the preserved lower right and left hands carry a *khaṭvāṅga* and a severed head (?). The bend in the left leg gives an impression that this figure was also in dancing posture. The figure of Śiva is also preserved with only the lower portion (*Pl.* 158). It is to be noted that this group of Mātṛkās was in the group of eight, with the inclusion of Vāyavī(?) as the eighth goddess. The general decorative quality and the iconographical peculiarities of the sculptures enable a dating to second half of eighth century AD.

A better preserved image of Kaumārī (*Pl.* 160) in the shrine adjacent to the Ekādaśaliṅgeśvara temple at Karvan, belongs to another group of Mātṛkās, evident from the smaller size of this image compared to the above group. Only this figure is seen at the site out of the group of seven or eight Mātṛkās. However, an image of Maheśvarī from Karvan, in the Baroda Museum belongs to this group.[4] Dancing Kaumārī is presented as having the right leg is *kuñcita-pāda*. While the two lower hands are in *kaṭisama* position, the upper two hands are broken off. The peacock vehicle is seen on the left side of her leg. This well preserved image has a majestic bearing and the restrain and equipoise is greatly enhanced by the shifted bent position of the head.

The Saptamātṛkā group from Vadaval (Banaskantha, Gujarat),[5] (*Pls.* 161 to 167) along with the same from Karvan, in more than one way illustrate a changed organizational format and details in the development of Mātṛkā sculptures in this region, which later lead to the beginning of high medieval refinement, exemplified in the mid-tenth century AD. Mātṛkā images at Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Mahādeva temple at Kekind (Nagaur, Rajasthan) (*Pls.* 168 to 171).

The images of Mātṛkās in standing position, along with Gaṇeśa, Śiva and Kālabhairava from Vadaval, with the exception of Kaumarī and Gaṇeśa are four-handed. Their respective vehicles find placement at the back, behind the legs. While the left elbow rest on the head of a standing male attendant, the right hand of Gaṇeśa hold the broken tusk. *Vīṇādhara* Śiva wears a *jaṭājūṭa* and a dwarfish figure of a male devotee with *añjali-mudrā* is shown on the left side (*Pl.* 161). Soundara Rajan points out that the image of Śiva was the central figure in the group, similar to Aihole and Mandor examples.[6] This conclusion is however, conjectural. Brahmāṇī standing in *dvibhaṅga* has three faces and is accompanied by a female figure and the *haṁsa* (*Pl.* 162). She has a *jaṭājūṭa* and holds *sruk* and *kamaṇḍalu* in the upper hands, and impart *varada* with the lower right, while carrying a child in the other hand. The figure of Maheśvarī is unusual (*Pl.* 163). The beautiful nude goddess has a subtly flexed posture, with the left feet kept sideways. The hands are mutilated, but a long horizontally placed stick like object held with the normal hands is also broken. Soundara Rajan names the object as *kaṅkāla daṇḍa,* associated with

Bhairava, who had to carry the skeleton of Viśvaksena in atonement of his sin, and points out that this Maheśvarī has been identified with this aspect of Bhairava. Further, the nudity of the goddess is probably deliberately emphasized to ensure the importance of it for the *Śākta*s.[7] A male figure is shown seated to right side of the goddess. A grinning animal, whose identity is difficult to specify, is similar to the vehicle of the Cāmuṇḍā from Samalaji (group-B, *Pl.* 60). Kaumārī holds a *śakti* in the right hand and in the left hand she holds a cock (*Pl.* 164). A peacock is present on the left side of the figure. Vaiṣṇavī stands in *tribhaṅga* posture with *swastika-pāda*.[8] The normal hands carry a child. The upper hands hold a *gadā* and a *cakra*. The Garuḍa mount is absent, but a female attendant is seen on the right side. Vārāhī's boar face is represented in profile (*Pl.* 165). The child, held by two hands is raised touching the snout of the goddess, as if kissing. The right upper arm is held in *abhaya-hasta* and the left upper arm holds the hem of the *uttarīya*. The right leg is extended backwards and is kept in *kuñcita* position. A female attendant stands to the right of the figure. Aindrī (*Pl.* 166) stands in a similar posture as Vārāhī. The upper right and left hands hold a flower and a thunderbolt. The child, held in the normal hands tries to grasp the flower held by the goddess. The elephant mount is seen behind the goddess. The four-armed emaciated Cāmuṇḍā is relatively less impressive. The *jaṭājūṭa* is tied with a snake; the necklace and the girdle are also of snakes. The long *muṇḍamālā* reaches below the knees. Only two hands are intact. The lower left hand is held at the shoulder level, the small finger of which indicates the gesture of drinking blood. She is shown standing on a human corpse. An animal with gaping mouth accompanies the goddess. The emaciated, gruesome looking Kālabhairava is also four-armed and wears a snake girdle (*Pl.* 167). A human corpse lies behind the deity and a gaping animal similar to that of Maheśvarī stand on its hind legs.

A first-half of ninth century AD date[9] for these sculptures seems to be probable considering the fine formal features. The smooth-ripeness of surfaces and the undulating, interlocked contours lend the overall organization of the space an expression of meditative calm and serenity. The rhythmic co-ordination of parts of the body, combined with an utmost confidence in the handling of three-dimensional volumes endow a restrain and control over the knowledge of dance. The crisp attenuation of certain features of the drapery do not obstruct the gentle movements, but mark counter points, in enhancing a tension and firmness. The ornaments treated with decorative intention, do not however become extraneous to the sculptural form. Yet, a certain complexity in the composition due to the foreshortened, criss-crossing contours, is also because of the presence of the additional accompanying attendant figure.

The Saptamātṛkās along with Śiva-Naṭarāja and an eighth goddess on the outer walls of Nīlakaṇṭheśvar Mahādeva temple at Kekind is a century later than the Vadaval group of images (*Pls.* 168 to 171).[10] Gaṇeśa in the beginning and Śiva at the centre seen in the Kekind order of standing Mātṛkā group follow the earlier western Indian tradition noted at Mandor. The order of the goddess follow the established convention. All the goddesses hold children and are four-handed, while Śiva has six hands. Brahmāṇī is three-faced (*Pl.* 168). Vārāhī has the head of a boar and is accompanied by a buffalo (*Pl.* 170). Apart from the *vāhana*s, all the figures are also accompanied by small attendant figures.

The elongated figuration of Kekind Mātṛkās exude grace and suppleness in the treatment of firm body volumes. The gently flexed postures, at certain points, however does tend towards looking sharply edged. The decorative jewellery and drapery overflow and become extraneous to the sculptural form, yet greatly contribute to the animation of overall space. A highly evolved sense of compositional schema and the repetition of it merely makes the figuration a matter of craftsmanly perfection, leaving a certain lack in the expressional realm. In fact, this in Kekind Mātṛkās, possibly has led the inter-subjectivity between the mother and the child to become a bit impersonal and mechanical.

Similarly, the laboriously achieved surface finish lend only a hard expression to the image of Brahmāṇī from Varman (Sirohi, Rajasthan) (*Pl.* 172). The three faces and the body (broken legs, probably was in a dance posture) definitely has its own artistic merit, but the decorative finish has become an end in itself. Along with the surviving portions of the lower left hand there are fragments of a broken hand of a child visible who touch the ear ornament of the goddess. But, the organic inter-relation seems to have snapped at the cost of the heavy intrusive decorative ornamentation and the glossy surface.

Medievalism in Prospect : Central India

The early medieval iconography in central India develop on comparable lines to that of western India. This can be characterized on the basis of overall organizational features and on the basis of innovations in the iconography of individual goddesses, both of which are analyzed from the point of view of style and formal details. As pointed out in the beginning of the chapter the construction of a unilinear evolutionary pattern is not the concern, but the disparate groups of Mātṛkā images discussed below exemplify an evolution arising out of relatively autonomous innovations based on series of departures from the previously available models. These, as in western India, however enable us to see the changes within the light of commonly shared period particularities. Elaboration of iconographical details and decorativeness are the two such points of reference.

In terms of elaboration of overall configuration the second group of Mātṛkās from Nand-Chand (group-B) mark an important station of shift, in the development of Mātṛkā iconography in central India (*Pls.* 173 to 176). The sculptures are datable to the second half of eighth century AD.[11] But probably, this is not the earliest standing Mātṛkā group that was made in this region, since the dancing type was in vogue in the border area (of Rajasthan and M.P.), exemplified by the images from Kota. Further, evidences prove that the latter type of images were made in the central area of this region, by about late seventh century. The case in point is the group of five very badly damaged Mātṛkās along with Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa located within the *Caunsaṭh Yoginī* temple at Bheraghat.[12] However, it is quite evident that from the earliest examples onwards the type that was predominant in central India was the seated kind. The standing Mātṛkās from Nand-Chand (group-B) is an exception, and hence considered here as a departure and a symptom of prospective medievalism in the art of central India.

The group comprises of seven goddesses (*Pls.* 173 to 176).[13] According to the description of Cunningham, these Mātṛkās and other Brāhmanical images were discovered in the vicinity of "a long row of small ruined temples...." located to the south-east of the Mātaṅgeśvara temple on the western bank of a tank that no longer exists.[14] The three-faced Brahmāṇī (*Pl.* 175) holds a *kamaṇḍalu* in the lower left hand. The attributes in the other three hands are not clear, though she seems to have held a flower in the upper left hand. The two-handed Kaumārī has a *śakti* and a flower(?) in the left and right hands (*Pl.* 173). Four-handed Maheśvarī and Aindrī hold children on their left hips supported by the normal left hands (*Pl.* 174). The former holds what must have been a *triśūla*, broken off at the top, and an *akṣamālā* in the upper left and the right hands. The normal right hand is in *varada-mudrā* and has a flower in it. The *jaṭājūṭa* and the crown are also characteristic features of Maheśvarī and Aindrī respectively. The boar faced Vārāhī is two-handed (*Pl.* 176). On the left hand, folded at the elbow and kept at the shoulder level, is a small image of the goddess Pṛthvī, which is a derivative feature from the Varāha icons. The same stand true in the case of the *ālīḍha* posture of the goddess. The right hand of Vārāhī holds what might have been a *gadā*, which is broken at the top. There is a tortoise under the left foot of the goddess, which may be to indicate *pātala,* from were the goddess Pṛthvī was reclaimed in the context of the Varāha *avatāra* myth. All the other goddesses are attended upon by their usual *vāhana*s.

The frontally visualized Nand-Chand (group-B) Mātṛkās lack variations. Even though the the legs are flexed, the sculptures, on the whole, are static and lack organic relationships. The children are rather insignificant in the configurations, the absence of inter-subjectivity between mothers and children is only too obvious. A regressive classical language in figuration is combined with an inability to instill spatial animation; the sculptor has left conspicuous empty spaces around the figures, which only serve to enhance the lack of organic feeling in the figures. However, fresh tendencies, such as the use of attendant figures for Brahmāṇī and Kaumārī, and the delineation of the floating *mālādhara* figures surrounded by clouds in all the images except that of Brahmāṇī are symptomatic of the innovative trends in Mātṛkā iconography. These in fact derive from the wider fund of available motifs, now put into use for Mātṛkā icons, not necessarily with any one and single meaning. In fact, the attendants and the *mālādhara* figures are depicted as such in almost all the medieval Brāhmanical icons, the symbolic and formal meaning levels of which are yet to be explored.

The Mātṛkā *paṭa* from Kangroll (Agra, U.P.), in the Government Museum, Mathura, preserves only three Mātṛkās (*Pl.* 177). It may be assigned a date not later than eighth century or early ninth century AD. All the Mātṛkās — Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī and Vārāhī are in similar dancing postures. Considering the iconography of a particular goddess, the Kaumārī, is exceptional since she is four-handed. Possibly this would be the earliest example of this kind from this region. She has a peacock as her vehicle. In her left lower and upper hands, she holds a *śakti,* and a *pustaka* respectively. The lower right hand has a *bījapūraka* fruit and the *āyudha* in the upper right hand is broken. Vaiṣṇavī has Garuḍa as her vehicle in human form. She holds a child in the lower left hand and has other usual attributes. The lower right hand is in *varada-mudrā*. Vārāhī's vehicle is buffalo. She carries a bell in the lower left hand. The upper right hand holds a *daṇḍa* and the lower right holds a partially broken dagger. The upper left hand is broken.

A mid-ninth century broken Mātṛkā *paṭa* comprising of four Mātṛkās; Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī and Cāmuṇḍā, from Kannauj (U.P.), marks a high point in the medieval icon making (*Pl.* 178). Each of the figures stand on separate lotus flowers, the petals of which droop over the edge of the stone pedestal. The goddess also have lotus halos encircled by beaded decorative strings. All the goddesses are four-armed. Vaiṣṇavī and Aindrī are adorned with intricately carved elaborate crowns. The jewellery of the goddesses too are carved with utmost care. Vaiṣṇavī stands in *tribhaṅga* accompanied by a female attendant on the right. Her usual *vāhana* is presented in human form on the left of the goddess, leaning upon the buffalo of Vārāhī. Vaiṣṇavī holds the usual *āyudha*s and the lower right hand is in *varada-hasta.* Vārāhī's animal head is in profile. She holds a fish, a bell, a skull-cup and a sword, in her lower left, upper left, upper right and lower right hands respectively. Aindrī's customary *vāhana* stand on the left side of the goddess. In the lower left hand she holds a *bījapūraka.* In the upper left and right hands, she carries an *aṅkuśa* and a flower respectively. The lower right hand is lowered down, enabling a beautifully positioned child to cling to her fingers. The emaciated Cāmuṇḍā is in dancing posture on a prostrate male figure, lying on his stomach, similar to the Apasmārapuruṣa in the Śiva-Naṭarāja images. The relative larger height and broader dimension of the goddess is proportionately aligned to the other figures. This skillful co-ordination, possibly made it necessary to portray the figure in *kṣipta* position with extended right leg in *sūcī-pāda*. An animal, probably a boar (or a dog ?), is seen behind the human *vāhana*. A figure bearing a weapon, attends the goddess on the left side. Cāmuṇḍā holds a bowl with her normal right hand, and the small finger of the lower left hand display the *mudrā* of blood drinking. In the upper left hand she holds what must have been a *khaṭvāṅga*, which is broken off at the top. In the upper right hand she holds a dagger of a peculiar shape.

To quote Pramod Chandra, "The figures are imbued with graceful rhythm and skillfully linked to each other by the inclination of their bodies, the attitudes of attendants and vehicles, and the gestures of their hands."[15] The sensuousness and restrain perfectly balance in the language of Kannauj sculptor. The deeply carved relief endow a contrast of light and shade, enabling the slender forms to achieve a maximum clarity. A certain impersonal aloofness of the gazes too balances well with the decorated spatial ambience. The complex spatial treatment co-ordinates different units — the attendants, the *vāhana*s, the decorative ornamentations, etc. into a gestalt of rhythmic patterns — characteristics so dearly upheld by the artists of medieval India.

Further Elaborations : Ellora

The Saptamātṛkā group along with Siṁhavāhinī Aṁbikā/Durgā, Kāla and Kālī, presided over by a Devī,[16] and attended upon by mortal women (possibly certain Rāṣṭrakūṭa queens), in the so-called *yajñaśālā* of Kailāśanātha temple at Ellora, exemplify a high point in the *Śākta* art within the previously discussed *Śaiva* dominance. Though much more elaborate in comparison to the antecedents at the site, the present group under consideration largely follow the conventions established earlier. The location of the Mātṛkā shrine on the south side of the main temple and facing north, for instance is a convention established almost two centuries before at the site.

On stylistic grounds, this group appears to belong to the last phase of sculptural activity in this gigantic cave temple.[17] H. Goetz attributed the excavation to the most illustrious Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda III (AD 793-814).[18] However, the sculptural activity in *yajñaśālā* could have been an undertaking in the last quarter of eighth century AD during the time of Dhruva (AD 773-93).

The Mātṛkās in the *yajñaśālā* are seated on raised pedestals adjacent to the south wall and face the northern direction. Though they are badly mutilated, including the emblems in their hands, the order and identities of the goddesses however are discernible since the *vāhana*s portrayed below their seats are preserved. Unlike the convention in Cave Nos. 14, 21 and 22, the large animal mounts here are not framed within rectangular spaces. Yet, following the earlier convention at the site, the goddesses are not seated directly on their *vāhana*s. The convention of depicting lotus seats is an innovation, and apart from the symbolic value, is also a sign of elaboration.

The seven goddesses are flanked on the right and left by Śiva and Gaṇeśa respectively. All the goddesses, except Cāmuṇḍā are seated in *padmāsana* with minor differences. Brahmāṇī and Maheśvarī are surely four-handed, but most of the emblems are lost. A child sits on the left thigh of the latter (*Pl.* 179). The images of Kaumārī, Aindrī and Cāmuṇḍā are broken above the waist (*Pls.* 179 & 180). Kaumārī too has a child in her lap. Vaiṣṇavī is better preserved but her hands are lost. So is Vārāhī's head, but unlike the earlier examples at Ellora she has a buffalo as her vehicle here (*Pl.* 180). The remaining portion of Cāmuṇḍā indicates normal human physiognomy, which could be seen as a revival of the earlier tradition at the site, since, from the intermediate period, the Cave No. 22 image shows an example of deviation. She has a jackal as her *vāhana*. All the other goddesses have their usual *vāhana*s.

On the left corner of the western wall, after the image of Gaṇeśa, according to the earlier convention at Ellora, is the sculpture comprising of the images of Kālabhairava and Kālī, along with an attendant (*Pl.* 181). The fierce and gruesome looking naked body of Kāla is emaciated. The snake ornaments and the dagger held in the right hand enhance the uncouth expression. The attendant too carries a dagger and a cup. Significantly these images are mounted on an ingeniously composed pile of human corpses, extending and enveloping spaces beyond its cofinement. The candidly disposed bodies and limbs express a certain naturalistic intention of the artist. The hanging right foot of Kāla rest on the face of one of the corpse. A jackal is also incorporated as part of the dead bodies.

Next to Kāla on the left side is the six-handed Devī (*Pl.*181). The hands are broken and no emblems remain. She too, like the Mātṛkās, is seated on a high lotus seat, but the *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* position distinguish her from them and align her with Cāmuṇḍā and Durgā/Aṁbikā on the right and left, and the queens on the opposite side. The other features of goddess, the crown and the third eye, along with the central location of the figure enable her identification as the locus of the assembly. The next figure on the extreme end is the four-armed Durgā who has a lion mount (*Pl.* 181). All the hands are broken, except the upper right, which holds a trident. She too has a crown and elaborate ornaments.

Any attempt at the specific identification of the goddess designated as Devī will have to be tentative since no comparable example of such a configuration is known in other groups of Mātṛkās. On the basis of the mistaken jackal mount, R. Sengupta has identified the figure as Cāmuṇḍā.[19] Zimmer described the three deities on the west wall thus : "These figures along the west wall represent three aspects of Devī, centre, on the lotus the creation and preserving aspect, right, on the lion, the warrior aspect (Durgā) at the left, on the two dead or dying men is Kāla (time), the lord of death, with the goddess peering over his right shoulder and at his left a skeleton".[20] Considering the central position assigned to the six-handed goddess, she could be identified as the goddess invincible—Aparājitā, if *Devī-Māhātmya* references can be considered as a valid supportive evidence. Described in the fifth chapter of the text, it is to her that the *Deva*s pray for the annihilation of Śuṁbha and Niśuṁbha.[21] She is the concept of Devī who is described as undivided and omnipresent, to whom the different emanations return. In fact, Aparājitā can be interpreted as being identical to Kauśikī of the tenth chapter of the same text, who stood alone after absorbing into herself all the Mātṛkā-*śakti*s and her own emanations — Kālī, Cāmuṇḍā and Śivadūtī, when Śuṁbha challenged her to fight the battle alone. Kauśikī said: 'the numerous forms which are projected by my power here have been withdrawn by me, and now I stand alone'.[22]

It is important to take into consideration the total sculptural layout of the shrine so as to understand the symbolic meaning of the configuration. Seated on the opposite side of Durgā-Aparājitā-Kāla and Kālī, facing the western direction are the three female figures, whose aristocratic bearing is almost equal to the goddesses (*Pl.* 182). But for their human features, (they are two-handed and without *vāhana*s) and the relatively lower sitting position, other aspects such as the idealization of the physical details and the *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* postures are the same as the goddess Aparājitā. The two female figures flanking the central figure hold *cowrī*s in their hands and thus signify an importance to the central figure. Her royal bearing is obvious, considering the special status she wields. In all probability this figure could be considered as the idealized portrait of the patron who sponsored the *yajñaśālā* project. R. Sengupta identifies these figures as the three queens of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda II and suggests the identity of the central figure as Gamundabhe.[23] The significant juxtaposition of the queen and the goddess Kauśikī could be based on certain allegorical implications, since the former appears to be addressing the presiding deity. The sculptural alignment metaphorically refers to the instance of the appeal of the *Deva*s to the invincible goddess for the annihilation of the demons, referred above. Here in an analogous manner, the queen appeals to the goddess, possibly for the victory over the enemies.

The iconographical programme of *yajñaśālā* by itself, indicate a relatively higher *Śākta* power at Ellora, but not an absolute total. The presence of Śiva is not quite marginal, since his importance as the creator (he is at the beginning of the group) and also as the all devouring time (Mahākāla) are the statements of *Śaiva* power. Yet, the *Śākta* dominance here is greater, or at least on an equal level, considering the particular overall sculptural programme. This came about possibly due to the patronage from the Rāṣṭrakūṭa queens, as evident also from the significant position ascribed to them, as they face the goddesses themselves.

Iconographic Fixity and Perfect Iconicity : South India

The absence of Saptamātṛkā icons in the early cave temples of south India has been pointed out in the previous chapter. The three later cave temples which incorporate such icons in Tamil Nadu are Vāgīśvara cave at Malayadippatti,[24] the cave at Tirugokarnam[25] and the Kakkolanātha cave at Tirukkalakkundi.[26] The third in the list is reported as a late eighth century Pāṇḍyan undertaking. Dakṣiṇāmūrti Śiva and Cāmuṇḍā flank the group on either sides. Seated on a common pedestal in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* the order of the goddesses follow the pan-Indian tradition and they are not accompanied by *vāhana*s. The Cāmuṇḍā has normal human body, but exude terror since she is adorned with *muṇḍamālā*, a dead child hanging as an ornament in the long earlobe and the fangs put out at the ends of her mouth.

The cave temple at Malayadippatti is dated to AD 812 on the basis of the inscription of Muttaraiyars, a feudatory family of late Pallava and Cola periods. In fact, the order and the iconographical details in all the above caves follow a standard format. Starting with Brahmāṇī and ending with Cāmuṇḍā, the goddesses are accompanied on either sides by Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Gaṇeśa. Harper opines that the Malayadippatti is the earliest group of Mātṛkās to be portrayed along with *vāhana*s in south India.[27] Unlike the other similar images from south India, here they are depicted on the standards near their heads, which is a unique convention noticed earlier at Elephanta. Raju Kalidos identifies the second and the seventh goddesses as Cāmuṇḍā and Maheśvarī, which is improbable since the seventh goddess with *jaṭābhāra* as elsewhere is the traditional place of Cāmuṇḍā and she has an owl as her *vāhana*, a convention noticed elsewhere.[28] Similarly, the second goddess Maheśvarī occupies her position after Brahmāṇī and has her usual *jaṭājūṭa* attribute.

The importance of Saptamātṛkās in Tamil country, however is more strongly evident due to their more frequent occurrence in the structural temples built by Pallava, Pāṇḍya and Cola kings. An early such instance, belonging to early eighth century (Kailāśānatha temple, Kanchipuram) has been already discussed in the previous chapter, where the Mātṛkā group is part of the iconographic programme of the Śaivaite temple. But, the loose sculpture of Mātṛkās from Mahabalipuram and the panel of Saptamātṛkās from Thiruvarur may suggest the prevalence of such icons in Tamil Nadu prior to eighth century.[29] Whether they may be dated to seventh century or later, the most significant point about these is the iconicity of their conception. An only exception to this is the Kanchipuram images (*Pl.* 140), which relatively is less rigid, obvious in their postural variations and the resulting complexity in the compositional rhythm; whereas, the images ascribed to seventh century and the other icons of eighth-ninth century, including the examples located in the cave temples exemplify a more or less common typology in iconography. The stylistic variation of these icons, by itself is not of interest in the present discussion, and the iconic fixity and iconicity are the primary concerns in the following analysis.

A set of five Mātṛkās, known from Tiruppunturutti (Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu), located in the Puṣpavaneśvara temple, is dated to early ninth century AD (*Pls.* 183 to 186). The standard iconographical formula developed in the region is well exemplified in these icons. All the goddesses, seated frontally in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* on separate stools, display identical poses with their four hands. The lower right hands are in *abhaya-mudrā* and since they do not carry children the lower left hands simply rest on the left thigh. The *vāhana*s are not depicted in any of the images. Brahmāṇī is three-headed (*Pl.* 183). In the upper right and left hands she carries *kamaṇḍalu* and *akṣamālā* respectively. Maheśvarī has *jaṭājūṭa* and holds a *paraśu* and a deer in the upper right and left hands (*Pl.* 184). Similarly Vaiṣṇavī holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper right and left hands (*Pl.* 185). Vārāhī is represented with frontally projecting boar's head, and she holds *hala* and *pāśa* in the upper right and left hands (*Pl.* 186). Vārāhī and Vaiṣṇavī wears *kūcabandha.* The fifth goddess, probably Kaumārī, holds *akṣamālā* and an unidentified circular object in the upper left and right hands.

It appears that the Saptamātṛkās from Perunkanchi (North Arcot, Tamil Nadu) were the main deities in the shrine (*Pls.* 187 to 189). From the rough outline of the foundation it can be made out that the temple faced east. The image of Śiva is installed at the north end and faces the southern direction.[30] All the Mātṛkās are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* and are four-handed. The lower right hands are in *abhaya-mudrā* and the left hand rests on the left thigh. No *vāhana* is portrayed. All the mothers wear *kūcabandha* with shoulder straps. Śiva holds *paraśu* in the upper right hand. On his forehead can be seen the third eye. The untied locks of hair are shown spread out at the back. Brahmāṇī is three-headed and holds an *akṣamālā* and a *kamaṇḍalu* (*Pl.* 187). Maheśvarī holds an *akṣamālā* and a snake in the upper right and left hands. She too is shown with a third eye. Kaumārī too holds an *akṣamālā* and a *kamaṇḍalu.* Vaiṣṇavī holds a *cakra* and a *śaṅkha* in the upper right and left hands. The boar faced Vārāhī carries *cakra* and *śaṅkha* (*Pl.* 188). Similarly Aindrī has only two hands and does not carry any *āyudha*. Cāmuṇḍā is four-handed and has normal human body (*Pl.* 189). Yet she has *jaṭābhāra*, protruding fangs and popping eyes. Her upper hands hold *triśūla* and a skull cup. The

Valaṁburi Gaṇeśa too has four hands. He holds *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa* and *modaka*. On the basis of style the group is dated to late ninth century AD.

The Mātṛkā group from Virattaneśvara temple at Tiruttani (Chittor, Tamil Nadu) which was build by Naṁbi Appi in the eighteenth regnal year of Aparājitā was the last known ruler of the imperial line of Pallavas.[31] This temple is ascribed to the last quarter of ninth century AD. The complete set of Saptamātṛkās are preserved in the *maṇḍapa* of the shrine[32] (*Pls*. 190 to 193). All the mothers are seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* on high pedestals. The lower hands are in identical position. The right and left hands are held in *abhaya-mudrā* and the other rests on the thigh. All the goddesses are wear *kūcabandha* with shoulder bands. Brahmāṇī is three-faced and holds *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* (*Pl.* 190). Unlike the icons discussed earlier, all the goddesses, except Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā have their conventional *vāhana*s represented on their respective seats. Maheśvarī carries *paraśu* and a deer. Kaumārī holds *akṣamālā* and *kuṇḍika* Vaiṣṇavī holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha*. Vārāhī has boar's head and holds *cakra* and *śaṅkha* (*Pl.* 191). She has a lion as her *vāhana*. Aindrī holds *vajra* and *pāśa* (*Pl.* 192). Cāmuṇḍā holds *triśūla*, *ḍamaru*, and a skull cup in the lower left hand. She also has a *muṇḍamālā* and skull in the hair (*Pl.* 193). She has protruding fangs and popping eyes and the *jaṭā* is let loose on either side of the head. She has a *piśāca* sitting in the place of her vehicle.[33]

The iconographic fixity and iconicity of the Mātṛkās in South India; the monotonous frontality and the postural and gestural regularity (at the same time the repetition as an interesting formal element, used in this tradition as a means of rhythmic co-ordination) originate in the Deccani tradition of seventh century, exemplified by the Mātṛkā icons from Alampur (Bāla-Brahma temple), and Chezerla (Kapotesvara temple) and also from Ellora, though possibly to a lesser extent. The absence of children in the Mātṛkā iconography in south India is conspicuous, and so also the iconographic features of Cāmuṇḍā, and these have their antecedents in Deccan. Further, the presentation of *vāhana*s merely as logograms, presented as symbols on the pedestals, without intentions of interrelating them with the goddesses, positively derive from the convention innovated at Ellora. Sculpturally, the formal aspects of the Mātṛkā icons described above are treated by the sculptors keeping in view their basic function, namely the iconic purpose. In a way, their seated positions become a convenient means of excluding flexions in their postures. The frontality and the schematic, formal dispositions of the limbs, combined with the impersonal gaze into the infinity endow the figures a certain authority over the devotee and also allow a certain psychological distance. The generic designation of Mātṛkā meaning a mother, however do not make it a prerogative for them to carry children, since motherhood of the goddesses is a matter that is taken for granted. (In fact, elsewhere when children are represented along with mothers the issue of intersubjectivity figure in, and in the process take away, or at least dilute much of the expected iconicity. In any case, no where is the purpose of icons (neither in literature nor in sculpture) correlated with the motherhood of the mortals.) However, beyond this is the realm of their meaning based on the concept of *śakti*; the energy/power that makes the world/matter move. Since the sculptures of the Mātṛkās are considered as 'storied' icons, the process of perfecting the image in south India show the elimination of the inconsequential in achieving the bare essentials and their perfection.

Paramountcy Śāktism via Tāntrism : Orissa

Although Tāntric philosophical principles are fundamental in the origin and development of Śāktism, historically both can be seen as having varied ramifications, since both the traditions find their incorporation (appropriative subsumption in cultic, mythic, philosophical and iconographical levels) in various combinations in the different religious traditions. These aspects await elaborate treatment in the final chapter. In the context of present section it is sufficient to point out that it is only when Tāntric philosophy is combined with Śāktism within the organized cultic practices that it is possible to consider a relatively autonomous paramountcy of Śāktism. The autonomy of the Śāktism is a problematic, considering its syncretic core which allowed disparate power constructs to determine its various tenets. As far as Mātṛkā iconography is concerned it is the *Śaiva* subsumption that is the most significant to be clarified. Considering the evidences in sculpture the instances of greater *Śākta* autonomy over that of *Śaiva* is rather rare. One such instance has already been noticed at the *yajñaśālā* shrine of the Kailāśanātha temple at Ellora. Another such instance with a greater paramountcy for Śāktism is the Vaital Deul temple at Bhubanesvar, dedicated exclusively to the cult of Mātṛkās, reflecting a strong Tāntric affiliation. The temple is dated to *ca.* AD 775.[34]

K.R. Panigrahi opines that the name of the temple, Vaital is to be linked to the type of cult that was practiced in this temple. "Vaital temple was a place of worship of Kāpālikas, who used to invoke the aid of the Vetālas (spirits) for their Siddhis, and from the word Vetāla the name Vaital has been derived".[35] The four walls of the *garbhagṛha* of Vaital Deul houses Mātṛkās in conjunction with other (primarily Śaivaite) deities, with Cāmuṇḍā as the locus, the esoteric character of which is unmistakable.

The sculptural programme of the *garbhagṛha* covers all the four walls. The central *devakoṣṭha* on the west wall enshrines an imposing image of Cāmuṇḍā, the central deity of the shrine, who, in fact, is part of the Saptamātṛkā group. The Mātṛkās are installed on the southern and part of western walls, on the right side of the presiding goddess (*Pls*. 194 to 196). Ingeniously designed, on the remaining part of the western wall and the northern and eastern walls Śaivaite and other deities flank the central image.

The group begins on the left of the doorway on the eastern wall with Vireśa Śiva who is shown with prominent *ūrdhvaretas*. He is seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* with the right foot resting on the usual vehicle. He wears a *jaṭājūṭa* and the left ear is adorned with a prominent *sarpakuṇḍala*. The lower right hand is shown in *varada-mudrā*. The upper right and left hands hold an *akṣamāla* and a *triśūla*. The object in the lower left hand is not clear. The first four goddesses, Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī and Vaiṣṇavī, (*Pl.* 194) occupy the southern wall. Brahmāṇī is three-headed. The attributes in all the four hands are obliterated. She wears only very few jewellery compared to other goddesses. Seated in *padmāsana*, Maheśvarī carries a *triśūla* and an *akṣamālā* in the upper left and right hands. Other objects that she holds are obliterated. The two-handed Kaumārī is seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana*. She has a rather elongated torso and looks younger compared to other goddesses. The left hand, which held a *śakti,* is broken. Seated in *padmāsana* Vaiṣṇavī is four-headed and holds *gadā, cakra* and *śaṅkha* in the upper right, upper left and lower left hands. The object in the lower right hand is obliterated. Vārāhī and Aindrī (*Pl.* 195) on the western wall are seated in *utkuṭikāsana* and *padmāsana* respectively. The former is four-handed and her boar head is in profile. The goddess has a slightly protruding belly, a convention of the region, noticed in earlier representations. She holds a fish, an *akṣamālā*, a *paraśu* and a skull cup in the lower right, upper right, upper left and lower right hands. The *gaṇa* figure shown standing on four legs also has its antecedent in the image at Paraśurāmeśvara temple (Bhubanesvar). Aindrī is two-handed and is adorned with a *kirīṭamukuṭa*. In the left hand the goddess carries a *vajra* and the other hand is broken. All the goddesses, except Vārāhī are also attributed with their usual *vāhana*s.

The goddesses are depicted in niches which are framed by decorated pilasters, an aspect that is akin to the Paraśurāmeśvara temple Mātṛkā group. One more similarity is the *kūcabandha* the goddesses are adorned with. The absence of children along with the Mātṛkās is a tradition linking them with the Paraśurāmeśvara images, and in turn to the idea of influence from Deccan. All the Mātṛkās are seated on lotus pedestals and below their seats can be seen various kinds of offerings, contained in jars and baskets. The *vāhana*s of the goddesses are also depicted in these rectangular compartments. In most of the figures the flying *mālādhara* figures flank the deities which add up greatly to the overall decorative treatment.

The central figure of emaciated Cāmuṇḍā for most part is always draped with cloth, since the image is still under worship (*Pl.* 196). M.P. Dash reports that the figure is eight-armed.[36] Under her feet a human corpse is visible. On the left side of the feet an owl can also be seen. In the centre of the coping stone of the *devakoṣṭha* of Cāmuṇḍā an image of Gajalakṣmī has been carved.

On the western wall to the left side of Cāmuṇḍā is a two-handed goddess, whose identity is confusing (*Pl.* 196). Her attributes are a trident and a flower in the right and left hands. She is adorned with elaborate jewellery and other decorative details. The goddess significantly has no *vāhana*. Panigrahi and M.P. Dash, identify the image as Śivadūtī on the basis of *Devī-Māhātmya* references.[37] However, it may be noticed that the *Devī-Māhātmya* description of Śivadūtī is of a ferocious deity. The deity under consideration is beautiful, and has benign import. Katherine Harper disagreeing the opinion of Panigrahi identifies the figure as Maṅgalā Devī, considering the *Devī Purāṇa* stipulation that the goddess may be represented among Mātṛkās.[38] Considering this as a valid suggestion, other possibilities may also be considered. According to *Devī-Māhātmya,* Pārvatī on hearing the praises of *Deva*s to supreme *Devī* divided herself into two;[39] one the beautiful Aṁbikā, and the other Kalika who later in the text is named as Cāmuṇḍā, since she annihilated the *Asura*s Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa. Aṁbikā is said to have come out of Pārvatī's physical sheath (*kośa*), and mentioned as glorified as Kauśikī in all the worlds.[40] It is possible that the goddess is Kauśikī, but probably could also be Pārvatī the consort of Śiva. The figure is accompanied by a *ṛṣi* on the left side, standing on a lotus, with raised right hand in veneration. Could he be the hermit Medhas, the narrator of *Devī-Māhātmya* to king Suratha and merchant Samādhi? Next to the goddess Kauśikī(?) on the left side is Gaṇeśa (*Pl.* 196), which confirms that the goddess is integral to the Mātṛkā group, and not an independent deity. Hence, can this be an evidence to consider this group as that of *Aṣṭamātṛkā*s?

Gaṇeśa at the end of the Mātṛkā group has four hands and is seated on a throne. He holds a flower and *paraśu* in the upper right and left hands. The lower right hand is in *abhaya-mudrā*, while the object in the lower left hand is unclear. He is without *vāhana*. After Gaṇeśa on the northern wall, are the images of Kālabhairava, Kubera, Varāha(?) and Nāgarāja. The six-handed Kālabhairava possibly conclude the Mātṛkā series. The emaciated, skeletal depiction of the deity is in *utkuṭikāsana* posture. The severed heads are placed on the pedestal as offerings to him. He carries a *kartārī* and a skull cup and a *muṇḍamālā* as an ornament.

On the eastern wall where the *pradakṣiṇā* ends, is an iconic representation of Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrti of Śiva. It is note worthy that *Śaiva* icons are at the beginning and at the end of the group. The presence of Śiva, especially his Vīreśa, Mahākāla and Gajāsurasaṁhāra forms, Viṣṇu in his Varāha(?) form, Kubera and the presence of small but centrally located Gajalakṣmī indicate a syncretic approach with in the Tāntric oriented *Śākta* religion at Vaital Deul.

The present study does not undertake a comprehensive analysis of the Orissan Mātṛkā tradition that falls within the time bracket. However, a lot of material from this region belong to late-medieval period, and hence fall outside the immediate concern of the present work. The Mātṛkā sculptures from various sites in eastern India, such as Mārkaṇḍeya Sarovara at Puri, Hooghly (Asutosh Museum, University of Calcutta), Khiching (Khandiya Deul), Jajpur, Belkhandi (Caṇḍī temple, Kalahandi), Bhubanesvar (Mukteśvara temple) and images from many other sites fall within a later time bracket. The *Śākta* cult and artistic manifestations in this region definitely demands more comprehensive study. Further, Orissa would be an ideal region to study the interrelationship and the mutual assimilation between the Mātṛkā tradition and that of *Causaṭ Yoginī*s, the temples and images of the latter are located at Hirapur, Ranipur, etc. The study of *Yoginī*s is an area of inquiry and has been taken up by Vidya Dehejia.[41]

Iconographical Summary

The standardized iconographic codes of Saptamātṛkā icons evolve through different stages, within which are located a series of disjunctive innovations. By the early medieval times (eighth-ninth century AD) these develop into a standardized and complex system of representational schema. The process of standardization (the formation of essential iconographic codes — *āyudha*s and *vāhana*s) during the eighth-ninth centuries AD developed largely out of those already established earlier, at different regions. From the late seventh or early eighth century AD onwards developments in standardization and elaboration is observed as a pan-Indian feature. These, however, are differently and in varying proportions and qualities find innovated and combined at various sites. The distinctions between the regions and sites during the eighth-ninth centuries originate largely within the parameters set by each of these traditions earlier. However, cases of inter-regional exchanges (particularly between western and central India) are also observed, enabling certain homogeneity between regions. Yet, south Indian Mātṛkā tradition develops autonomous codes, quite distinct from other regions, although the initial inspiration derives from outside (Deccan).

The process of shift to early medieval features is characterized by incorporation of certain fresh iconographical details for at least some of the goddesses. At the outset all the goddesses were two-handed (Badoh-Pathari). By the early medieval period almost all the goddesses are attributed with four hands. Yet, deviation from this general rule is noticed with regard to Kaumārī and Aindrī (Vaital Deul, Bhubanesvar, and the former also in group-B at Nand-Chand). Apart from the symbolic significance, the four hands allowed the sculptors to incorporate children comfortably, while allowing the other hands to carry other emblems. In south and east India the extra hands are either left vacant or are used for displaying *abhaya* or *varada*. The convention of attributing *mṛgacarma* to Brahmāṇī is no more evidenced. Further, the practice of avoiding elaborate jewellery for the goddess is followed only at Vaital Deul, Bhubanesvar, elsewhere she is represented similar to other goddesses. But, on the whole the iconographical innovations of the independent goddesses during early medieval period is rather limited. Except Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā whose *vāhana*s and other features (such as physiognomy, and *āyudha*s) kept varying between different sites and regions, the iconography of all other goddesses maintained a more or less predictable consistency. In contrast to the earlier alteration between human and animal head, during this period Vārāhī finally achieves a standardized boar-head as a pan-Indian feature. Generally, represented with a beautiful physique, in eastern India she has an uncouth pot-belly, and distinctness in terms of seated position. Noticeable changes also occur in the attributes of the goddess, since particularly in eastern India she hold objects such as fish and skull cup, considered as signs of Tāntric import. In certain cases Maheśvarī assumes an ascetic personality, (*jaṭājūṭa, akṣamālā*) probably due to her mistaken identification with Pārvatī (Seraikela, Tiruppunturutti). Cāmuṇḍā's form during the period under consideration maintained a regional bearing. Except for south India (and at Kailāśanātha temple, Ellora) everywhere else her body is emaciated. In the southern tradition she has a normal body, but terrifying features, such as fangs, popping eyes and *jaṭābhāra*. Yet, her *vāhana*s are still varied in every region.

The images of Śiva accompanying Mātṛkās have a certain consistency as per the regions. In south India he assumes Dakṣiṇāmūrti form, while in Deccan his forms vary between Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Vīreśa forms. In eastern India he seems to assume Vīreśa form, while in central and western India his forms vary between Vīreśa, Naṭarāja and Vīṇādhara forms. The presence of Kālabhairava icons continue to be integral to Mātṛkā groups in western India (Karvan and Vadaval) and in Deccan (Kailāśanātha temple, Ellora). In eastern India (Vaital Deul, Bhubanesvar) his icon is a fresh incorporation, where his postural specificity is a regional option. The image of the deity at Kailāśanātha temple at Ellora can be seen as distinctly and ingeniously visualized in contrast to the earlier versions at the site.

In terms of postures of Mātṛkās western and central India kept altering between seated and standing positions, but a greater predominance for standing and dancing images (Karvan, Vadaval, Kekind, Nand-Chand (group-B), Kannauj, etc.) can be seen manifesting during ninth century, probably due to their incorporation on the temple walls. Whereas in Deccan, south and east India the preference is only for the seated positions. Within this the options range between *padmāsana* and *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* or at places *utkuṭikāsana* (mainly for Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā).

Incorporation of Vāyavī is a distinct feature in western India, consistently seen from a relatively early period (Samalaji-C, Amjhara-B, Mataria, Karvan and many later images). In the state of present knowledge it is difficult to conclude whether this goddess replaced any other goddess in the conventional Saptamātṛkā group or formed the eighth goddess to make at last some of these groups as that of *Aṣṭamātṛkā*s.

From eighth century onwards we can also notice that the goddesses are also provided with attendant figures, as evidenced in most of the sculptural groups discussed in this chapter. But, the south Indian tradition is an exception to this, where a certain austerity associated with iconic representation exclude any such non-essential elements. Attendant figures, flying images of semi-divine beings, varied postures and gestures, functional things displayed (such as offerings etc.), ornaments and purely decorative ornamentations, incorporated in varying proportions, endow much of the sculptures of Mātṛkās from the regions other than south India complexity in terms of their sculptural languages. These, however, do not have much iconographic value, but iconologically could indicate the changed 'taste' sphere emerging from psychological and sociological demands.

It appears that, although the iconographical features are more or less fixed, there are hardly any instances of a mechanical repetition or a total formal conformity in terms of the sculptural language. In each sculpture iconographical details are ingeniously worked out, keeping in view the aesthetic perfection of the forms. Hence, though primarily considered as icons for ritual purpose, the aesthetic values have hardly ever been ignored.

References

1. As per the A.I.I.S., Varanasi, photo-documentation records, these sculptures are doubtably mentioned as hailing from Modi.
2. Brahmāṇī is mentioned in the A.I.I.S. records as hailing from Indragarh (Mandśor, M.P.) and Maheśvarī is mentioned as belonging to Lotakheda (Mandsore, M.P.). The

details of the design of the girdles in the images of Vaiṣṇavī and Vārāhī (doubtfully mentioned as hailing from Modi) are identical with those of Maheśvarī and Brahmāṇī. Hence they could all be belonging to one group.

3. These images were found scattered in the courtyard of the recently built Sindhvai Mātā temple on the eastern side of the village. The Kaśīviśvanāth Temple in the village has the broken upper portion of a Vārāhī which belongs to this large group.
4. (a) U.P. Shah, "Ancient Sculptures from Gujarat and Saurashtra", in *Journal of Indian Museums*, Vol.VIII, 1952, p. 54, Fig. 12, date the sculpture of Kaumārī to the Gurjara-Pratihāra rule in *c.* eighth century AD.

   (b) K.V. Soundara Rajan, "A Magnificent Sapta Mātṛkā Group and Pārvatī from Vadaval", in *Glimpses of Indian Culture, Architecture, Art and Religion,* Delhi, 1981, p. 229, refers to Karvan Mātṛkās as a sources for Vadaval Mātṛkā group and also mentions that the Karvan sculptures show Cālukyan influence. The article is originally co-authored with R.T. Parikh, published in *PWMB,* No. 7, 1959-62.
5. K.V. Soundara Rajan, *ibid.*, 1981, p. 227. The original site of these sculptures are not known. It is also not known how they came to the Vadaval village. Soundara Rajan, speculates that the images might have come from either Sabarkantha area or the neighbouring border area of Sirohi and the vicinity of Jagat. These sculptures are made of a fine quality of sandstone, unlike the earlier sculptures from Samalaji and Amjhara, which employed pachy schist.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
8. The figure is the only one that is left at the find spot, *see* Soundara Rajan, *op.cit.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
10. Michael W. Meister, *ABA*, Vol. XLVII, (ref. Chart-B) p. 235, identifies the eighth figure following Cāmuṇḍā as Kṣemaṅkarī, so that the group is referred to as the Saptamātṛkās, and maintains that the purpose of this is to complete the architectural scheme, p. 236.
11. Donald M. Standtner, "The Saṅkaragaṇa Panel in the Sagar University Art Museum", in *Indian Epigraphy — Its Bearing on the History of Art,* ed. by Frederick M. Asher and G.S. Gai, New Delhi, 1985. On the basis of the inscribed portrait sculpture of Śaṅkaragaṇa, and the other early Kalacuri Inscriptions, these Mātṛkās are ascribable to AD 750-800. The Mātṛkā sculptures are stylistically identical to the Śaṅkaragaṇa panel.
12. (a) Debala Mitra, "Dancing Mothers of Bheraghat", in *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters 22*, no. 2, (1956).

    (b) Katherine Harper, *Seven Hindu Goddess of Spiritual Transformation*, New York, 1989, pp. 130-31, Pls. 84-86.
13. Due to the non-availability of photographs, Cāmuṇḍā and Vaiṣṇavī are not discussed presently.
14. Cunningham, *ASR,* Vol. XXI, pp. 160-63. Pl. XL-XLI as quoted by Donald M. Stadtner; *op.cit.,* p. 166.
15. Pramod Chandra, *Sculpture of India, 3000 BC-1300 BC,* Washington, 1985, Pl.43, p. 109.
16. The generic designation denotes in abstract terms any one concept of the supreme goddess; the identity of the same is however necessary, and is discussed in the later part of the section. Ref. Odile Divakaran, "Durga the Great Goddess: Meanings and Forms in the Early Period", in *Discourses on Śiva*, ed. by Michael Meister, 1984, p. 271.

17. The figure of Gaṅgā on the right of the central *garbhagṛha* in Cave No. 16, the Aṁbikā of Indrasabha cave, the two Dvārapālikās, and the figures of Yajñaśālā have close stylistic semblance and represent a common period style, and probably can be attributed to one master sculptor. The early medieval qualities are apparent in them in terms of the method of carving and the attitude towards decoration.
18. Dr. H. Goetz, "The Kailāsa of Ellora and the Chronology of Rāṣṭrakuṭa Art", in *ABA,* Vol. XV, 1/2, 1952, p. 100.
19. R. Sengupta, "The Yajñaśālā of Kailāsa at Ellora and Identification some of its Sapta Mātṛkā", in *Indian Historical Quarterly,* Vol. XXXVI, 1960. Sengupta identifies the nine goddesses as Caṇḍī (i.e., Durgā), Cāmuṇḍā and Saptamātṛkā, as per the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* description. The jackal, which the scholar identifies as the *vāhana* of the figure, in fact accompanies the dead men, because it is insignificantly presented quite below the pedestal of the goddess. If we consider this in comparison to the convention of the portrayal of *vāhana*s in other goddess, it is obvious that the animal in this case is not meant as a *vāhana.* Sengupta asks that, when all other goddesses have *vāhana*s why this goddess alone should be deprived of one. The answer to this lies in the fact that the goddess is one of the supreme forms of Devī, who was not commonly represented. The text is also silent about such a detail, and hence the sculptor probably chose not to have a *vāhana* for the deity. The six hands are however, a clear testimony of her being the supreme goddess. Further Cāmuṇḍā is already present in the goddess rank along with Saptamātṛkās. Sengupta argues that in the Deccan, *Varāha Purāṇa* was followed, which includes Cāmuṇḍā in place of Narasiṁhī of *Devī-Māhātmyam*. "Thus it appears that while depicting the nine goddesses according to *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* the Saptamātṛkās were depicted in the traditional way with Cāmuṇḍā, she was figured once more together with Caṇḍī, otherwise in Saptamātṛkā group Narasiṁhī should have been depicted instead of Cāmuṇḍā". It may be noted that in no representation of Saptamātṛkās, at Ellora or any other related sites, Narasiṁhī is shown in the place of Cāmuṇḍā. Hence it may be observed that Saptamātṛkā convention generally follows *Varāha Purāṇa*, which is true for this case too, but the depiction of the two goddesses Durgā and Kauśikī follows *Devī-Māhātmya.*
20. H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia,* Vol. I, p. 410.
21. *Devī-Māhātmya,* V, 5, The epithet Aparājitā in this context is not used for an autonomous goddess concept but as a description of the Devī.
22. *Ibid.*, X, 7-8.
23. R. Sengupta, *op.cit.,* 1960, pp. 64-66. Elaborating upon the hypothesis, the author points out that compared to Dhruva's northern expedition (*ca.* AD 790) the one launched by Govinda III was more elaborate. Probably for the success in the war the king performed a sacrifice. At the time of the rituals, probably the cooperation of his wife was not available, which necessitated the portrait of the queen to be sculpted at the *patnīśālā.* confirming such a possibility the scholar gives the instance of Śrī Rāma while performing *Aśvamedha,* resorted to a similar convention by installing a *kāñcana* Sītā, as she had been sent away to the forest. R. Sengupta also opines that the Yajñaśālā at Ellora was designed on the analogy to the actual Yajñaśālā for Agniṣṭoma constructed elsewhere.
24. For detailed description refer Raju Kalidos, The Malayadippatti Cave Temples, in *South Asian Studies*, vol. IV, 1988.
25. For details *see* Raju Kalidos, *Iconography of Early Medieval South India : vol. III, Śakti*

Goddesses, Thanjavur, 1990, pp. 224-25.
26. Katherine A. Harper, *op.cit.*, p. 138, Figs. 98-100.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
28. Raju Kalidos, *op.cit.*, 1988, p. 60.
29. Katherine Harper, *op.cit.,* pp. 134-38. Figs. 96-97.
30. S.T. Baskaran, "The Sapta Mātṛkās of Perunkanchi", in *LK*, 17, p. 15.
31. Douglas Barrett, *The Temple of Virattaneśvara at Tiruttani*, Bombay, 1958, p.2.
32. R. Nagaswamy, *op.cit.,* 1982, p. 170.
33. *Ibid.*
34. K.R. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains of Bhubanesvar*, Bombay, 1961, p. 60.
35. *Ibid.*
36. M.P. Dash, "Worship of Sapta Mātṛkās and their Representations in Orissa Temples", in *The Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1962.
37. (a) K.R. Panigrahi, *op.cit.,* 1961, p. 79.
    (b) M.P. Dash, *op.cit.,* 1962, p. 118.
38. Katherine Harper, *op.cit.*, 1989, p. 143.
39. *Devī-Māhātmya*, 5.83-88.
40. *Ibid.*, 5.87.
41. Vidya Dehejia, *Yoginī Temples and Cults*, New Delhi, 1986.

7

Iconology of Saptamātṛkās

Historical Perspective

THIS chapter deals with iconological interpretations and meaning deductions of Saptamātṛkā myths and iconography, within the framework of a general historical continuum and the evolution of the broad religious sphere, in ancient India. The religious sphere, designated as neo-Brāhmanism[1] and the accultured pantheon (considered here as having political implications) is a product of a long-drawn historical process. In other words, it is an inquiry in understanding the politico-social and economic implications underlying the formation of myths and the iconography of the various goddesses. These involve contextualising within history the specific aspects of *Śākta* religion in relation to other comparable traditions, (such as those of *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* denominations) that lend itself to the formation of *Śākta* iconographical traditions, and here the case in focus is the Saptamātṛkā icons.

Methodological Considerations

Methodologically, the above objectives imply a hypothesis that the religious systems and the traditions of icon making and its usages in the society derive their meanings from the evolving socio-political realities. The attempt to contextualise the goddess myths and icons within the developmental process of neo-Brāhmanism, is to analyze the encoded meanings of particular iconographic forms in relation to the power relations of classes and genders. This transgression of the autonomous treatment of iconography (descriptions of icons or meaning deductions of symbols, in relation to textual references), implicate a deviation taken from the established notions and protocols of the discipline.[2]

The problematic we address here involves a consideration of social history and the sociology of neo-Brāhmanism, assimilating and sustaining within it the sphere of the goddess; their personalities that manifest through the myths and the visual images. These are viewed as inextricably embedded within the historical developments of interactive relationships of the classes and the gender. Considering the intended focuses and the address points the chapter propose to undertake, as a practical alternative, the detailed sociological and political informations and the lengthy interpretative passages of validation and explanations are mostly included in the section of notes and references.

Since one of the primary concerns is analyzing the subsumptive acculturation of heterogeneous non-Vedic elements (theological, mythic, philosophic and ritualistic) into the formation of the composite corpus of neo-Brāhmanical *Śākta* religion, the analysis would begin in the historical context of the late-Vedic times. The historical process of the breaking-up of the exclusiveness and purity of the Āryan tribes leading to acculturation already figures in the late-Vedic scriptures. The magical rituals and spells postulated in *Atharvaveda* exemplify the early phase of such development. The early Vedic polarization between gods and demons,[3] the former being characterized as having *ṛta* (law and order) and the latter as wielding *māyā* (magic power), and the exclusion of evil elements as such in the characterization of the gods in the pantheon, went through a process of transformation, particularly in association with Rudra-Śiva and gods in the lunar complex.[4] However, in the context of acculturisation as exemplified from the late period onwards, the disparate sinister, autochthonous elements remained in gestation for a long period, waiting for mediations and validation until a consolidated theological and mythological schemata was evolved during the neo-Brāhmanical consolidation, which also allowed certain flexibility in defining the personality of a deity.

The commonly used terminology, acculturisation, describing such cultic processes generally has not been viewed as a dialectical process, and merely suggests an organic, superficial, indiscriminate and 'natural' absorption of mutual interest; a non-conflictual and non-ideological mixing or merging of disparate traits. Acculturisation as a theoretical construct adopted for the analysis here is defined as the appropriation and assimilation of the 'other'; gender and classes (the productive forces) into a subsumptive position within a dominant discourse.[5]

Though at variance with the Brāhmanical acculturisation of subaltern deities, a process of assimilation is reflected in the incorporation of Śrī-Lakṣmi, Yakṣa, Nāga, etc. in the 'high' Buddhist tradition, as evidenced by the representation of these in the early Buddhist monuments. This, however needs to be understood as distinct from the neo-Brāhmanical acculturation, since the incorporation of these into Buddhist iconographical programme was a 'natural' process of inclusion, and illustrates the upward mobility of lower classes, since the converts belonged to these classes who availed a higher social status and legitimacy, which also endowed a great sense of cohesiveness within the Buddhist society.[6] In the light of evidences of community patronage of Buddhist monuments in the ancient period,[7] the presence of these even as demi-gods endowed a certain sense of identity to the converts without requiring any specific adjustment in the core ethical and moral teachings that Buddhism postulated. Since the Buddhist subsumptive acculturation is part and parcel of the process of upward mobility of the class status of productive forces in the society, it is considered as distinct from the neo-Brāhmanical subsumption, interpreted in terms of colonization of female gender and producer classes. However, the historical origin of Buddhist doctrine, the class from which it arose, the section of society among which it gained access, and the subsumption of classes as reflected in the textual and plastic narratives are areas to be considered elaborately and critically, which merit full-length survey which is outside the scope of present work.

During the period of phenomenal growth of Buddhism in the ancient period, the development of Brāhmanism was stultified, possibly due to absence of consolidated social ideology which could not be postulated at the time of the changing socio-political conditions.[8] But at a later period the Brāhmanical assimilation of the productive forces was achieved through a mediation by the *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* power nexus, and the cults and theophanies of lower classes were brought under the dominant power, which became the foundation in the formation of the composite corpus of neo-Brāhmanism. This came about as a result of a dialectical situation, the conflict for social power between the *brāhmaṇa* and the heterodox sects. Unlike Buddhist acculturation, the process of assimilation in the neo-Brāhmanical sphere necessitated structural adjustments, particularly in the areas of theology, mythology and philosophy. The mediated postulations of neo-Brāhmanism comprised of a mythico-idealist world-view; wherein the need for winning over divine favour is constantly acted out and ascertained in the mythico-political narratives of 'godliness' winning over the 'demonic', which is a core factor in the ideology of domination. The motivation that determined the specific characterization of the sectarian divinities in neo-Brāhmanism, thus was based on political purposes, which enable the reading of commonalities between neo-Brāhmanism of different denominations —*Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava* and *Śākta* spheres. These, on the flip side, comprised of the philosophical rationalisations; of suffering due to the cycle of re-births; the metempsychosis; *janmāntaravāda* and the *karma* theory; the belief in fate and the notion of theophanies as liberators from sufferings (*saṁsāra*), while prayers constantly also confirmed a life of wealth, well-being and longevity, postulations of *pūjā* as opposed to *yajña*; varied and often opposing ways, systems, rituals and methods for achieving salvation. Unlike the Buddhist assimilations of heterogeneous traditions, Brāhmanical acculturisations had been transformative, since these had to be rationalized within the overarching ideological framework as defined by the brāhmaṇa theologian and the *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* politico-social and economic power nexus. However, a number of parallelism in the theological, philosophical rationalisations in the case of deification of Buddha and the related pantheon, between contemporary Buddhism and neo-Brāhmanism can be observed, which in the present context is rather irrelevant to go into.

Considering that the changes in the Brāhmanical mainstream in theology, philosophy, mythology, cult and rituals are concomitant with the larger historical transformations of society, these can be seen best reflected earliest in the post-Vedic religious scriptures.[9] The social conflicts, its resolutions and the formation of a consolidated neo-Brāhmanical ideological view, with its varied ramifications is reflected in the early phases of the development of various sects, sub-sects and philosophical schools.[10]

Systematization of the neo-Brāhmanical social order was concurrent with the consolidation of the non-Vedic, acculturised pantheon and the conflation of it with Vedic materials. The history of its evolution is long-drawn and derive from heterogeneous sources. Further, it operates within a double bind between ancient socio-political history on one hand, and the religious history comprising of the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa-Āgama-Smārta* religious traditions on the other, the last being the most advanced exemplary source in defining the conflation between the Vedic and the non-Vedic approaches.

Neo-Brāhmanism and the Acculturation of the Goddesses

Various scholars agree upon the heterogeneous non-Vedic sources, that were incorporated into the origin and formation of the popular neo-Brāhmanical Purāṇic sectarian religions, which is particularly true for the cult of *Śāktas*. The non-Āryan, aboriginal, eschatological origin of the specific goddesses such as Kālī, Durgā, Aṁbikā, etc. is an accepted speculation among scholars.[11] However, these incipient, non-deity entities (in the sense of their relative power), at the historical juncture of post-Vedic period do not develop into a vision comparable to that of the Purāṇic Devī, equated with the all-encompassing Upaniṣadic *Brahman*, re-surface much later in history when adopted by Brāhmanical theologians while shaping the concept of a Goddess in the sectarian context. Considering the growth and importance of agriculture in the mid first millennium BC till about fifth century AD, it is the divinities such as Śrī-Lakṣmī or the other related goddesses of fertility such as various Yakṣiṇīs who were of consequence as far as 'people'[12] at large was concerned. The prevalence of the propitiation of chthonic goddesses related to eschatology among such 'people' can be only speculated upon, without any specific evidences as such to support. Similarly, the details of their early assimilation into Brāhmanism too is virtually impossible to know, since these epiphanies which are found mentioned in the early Brāhmanical sources are not associated with any mythologies, or are not corroborated with other kinds of historical data.

Before going into the iconological specificities and interpretations, it is necessary to locate the neo-Brāhmanical goddesses tradition within the general theological, mythical and iconographical tradition. The large body of the neo-Brāhmanical literary data provide adequate evidence of the positional location of the various goddesses in relation to the domain of male divinities, and the consolidation of these within the ideology of evolving *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* power nexus. To specify the divine female sphere within this ideology entails an analysis of relationships; conflicts and resolutions, inclusive of the normative gender 'representations' within neo-Brāhmanism, and the goddesses as important agents (consider the compositeness of the goddesses personalities) in the assertion of neo-Brāhmanical power over classes.

If the neo-Brāhmanical movement is read as a totalising and homogenizing process in asserting dominance through coercive *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* power over the agriculturally productive lower social strata and the women as nourisher; the culture producers of the heterogeneous localized traditions, it was historically played out as twin processes of systematization of the social structure[13] and the standardization of social norms, including that concerning the female gender.[14] Attempts at redefining the social structure and religious practices through the ever widening sphere of Āgamic values is attested by the royal inscriptions and religious literature.[15] Without going into the detailed discussion of the neo-Brāhmanical social standardization[16] we shall take up the issue of power relations, conflicts and resolutions in the neo-Brāhmanic pantheon.

Śiva and Viṣṇu, the two most important theophanies exemplify the prime heroes of the neo-Brāhmanical pantheon, the available evidences, epigraphical and sculptural, prove their sectarian bearing a few centuries before Christian era, while literary evidences indicate the process of origin and acculturation belonging to still earlier times. The conflation and consolidation of Vedic and non-Vedic elements reached a climax in the case of these two (and related theophanies) during the Gupta period. Āgamic and Purāṇic sources and the large body of sculptural material stand testimony to this and their varied ramifications throughout the medieval times and later.

Before going into the analysis of myths and 'representations' of the goddesses in relation to the above two theophanies an overall consideration of the changed theological consciousness which gave rise to the new pantheon is necessary. Sukumari Bhattacharji maintains that in the later sections of *Rāmāyaṇa* (i.e., the first part of the *Bālakāṇḍa* and the whole of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*), the late sections of *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇa*s we find a new pantheon, distinct from that of the older Vedic pantheon.[17] Apart from the prominent position of the powerful sectarian deities Śiva and Viṣṇu, minor theophanies of "comparatively late origin like Durgā, Kālī, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Lakṣmī, Kāma, were new arrivals and gradually became firmly entrenched in power. Rich and complex rituals and myths grew around them."[18]

The exact period of standardization of the neo-Brāhmanical triad; Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, is difficult to ascertain. Despite the disparities and antagonisms in their personality traits, sources of origins and worship modes, the triad however came to represent the co-ordinated cosmic functions of creation, preservation and destruction. Exemplifying henotheism similar to *Ṛgveda*, the early references in *Mahābhārata* do not present a clear line of demarcation separating their stations or functions.[19] But, the early *Purāṇa* such as *Kūrma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Matsya* testify their specific cosmic functions.

The triad is an all-male construct, observes Emily Kearns.[20] By implication this exclusion of the sphere of goddesses from the cosmic functions at the early stages of Epic-Purāṇic religion suggests the patriarchal bias of the *brāhmaṇa* theologians. However, simultaneous with the standardization of Tripuruṣa, we notice the prevalence of the propitiation of the goddess, primarily in her warrior aspect, this, as such being one of the most prominent features of the goddesses in the later times too. Durgā, the most prominent among such divinities, and the one who conjures up a vision of the great Goddess is linked with some of the oldest prayers in the epics and some of the *Purāṇas*.[21] The two invocations of Durgā in *Mahābhārata* at the outset of war, the one by Yudhiṣṭhira called *Durgāstava,*[22] the other by Arjuna called *Durgā-stotra*,[23] and two others in *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, one by Pradyumna[24] and another by Aniruddha,[25] exemplify a certain 'autonomous' power this Goddess exercised upon the warrior class. It is paradoxical that Durgā remained unassimilated into the triad power construct of the neo-Brāhmanism. Since Durgā at this relatively early stage of development of neo-Brāhmanical revival was not attributed with any cosmic functions, it is logical to postulate the view that she ruled over only a particularized sphere of mundane patriarchal concern, namely the empowerment at the start of coercive action,[26] which by itself may be derivative of a non-Brāhmanical heritage.

Though not included among the cosmic functionaries, Durgā is praised by Yudhiṣṭhira as 'the soverign of three worlds'. Apart from the political yearnings of the *kṣatriya* class that is implicit, perhaps, this also indicates the sectarian 'autonomy' of the goddess cult under way of its development. This direction can be said to consolidate itself around fourth-fifth century AD, and the prime evidence derive from sculptural materials, apart from what can be deducted from the *Devī-Māhātmya* text of the same period.

Another station in the development of neo-Brāhmanic standardization of theophanies is that of the *Pañcāyatana* mode. The definite period of the consolidation of *pañcadevopāsanā*, which includes Devī as one of the component, apart from Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya and Gaṇapati, similarly, is difficult to ascertain.[27] Certainly later by many centuries in relation to Tripuruṣa concept, the standardization seems to have been devised by the *Smārta brāhmaṇa* in their attempts at syncreticism, this being one among the many similar cases. Rather than the attribution of larger cosmic functions as found in the *Tripuruṣa* concept, the role that each of the deities function is in relation to the *Smārta* ritualistic compositeness, which allowed adequate flexibility in choosing one principal deity, hierarchically placed in relation to others in the group.

The sole female in the *Pañcāyatana* group is also the least clearly defined.[28] The question of whether or not the goddess represented in the constellation is **a** Goddess among many, or **the** Goddess (generically referred to by the title Śakti or Devī), remains to be investigated.

However, for the purpose of iconological analysis, it is necessary to contrast the overall pattern of myths concerning Goddesses to those of the prominent male divinities, so as to discern the positional relationships. If the dominance of patriarchal social values can be interpreted as implicit in the *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* myths in the *Purāṇa* sources, the constructs of feminine mythopoeia is dependent on, and to a great extent subsumed in, the former. As such the myth cycles of Viṣṇu and Śiva, extensive, complete and comprehensive, delineating full-fledged career and personality details, are easy to be discerned in contrast to the incompleteness of that concerning the goddess/es. Śiva is the vanquisher of demons, the ascetic-*yogī*, the consort of Pārvatī and Gaṅgā, the father of Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa, the supreme dancer-musician, creator and destroyer, the supreme teacher and philosophically much more. Similarly, *Vaiṣṇava* mythopoeic too is pervasive and extensive, having a primary pre-occupation with preservation and sustenance of the world on the lines of the *dharma* defined by the *brāhmaṇa*, via the rationalisation of *avatāra-vāda*. Contrary to this, the goddess myths do not conjure up a singular personality around which an autonomous body of myths could grow.[29] Devī's disparate personality traits in relation to that of *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* mythological construction is only too obvious to be discussed in detail. In many instances the stultified sphere is exemplified by the familial subordination, as wife, daughter, lover, or simply as the personification of nature; wealth, fertility, auspiciousness or its opposite. Though any goddess may be addressed as mother with utmost respect, there are only very few exceptional instances of goddess myths relating to the significance and venerability of the motherhood. These too are not without the interventions and challenges from the patriarch.[30]

The myths concerning goddesses in comparison to those of Viṣṇu and Śiva can be speculated to have been devised relatively later. There would be no evidence to disprove the contention that 'representing' the feminine in the mythology was a prerogative of the patriarchy, essentialising and idealizing, for the maintanence and perpetuation of the values of the dominant gender and class. Even the seemingly autonomous sphere of the 'representation' such as the abstract theological concept of Śakti; power as feminine gender, or those of the non-familial theophanies such as the Mahiṣāsuramardinī Durgā and the Saptamātṛkā can be seen as being subsumed within discourses of power in the dominant religious order.

Despite all these limitations, the earliest mythological compilation extolling the glory of the supreme goddess, namely *Devī-Māhātmya*, presents the goddess as a supreme power to reckon with, as she is made to play out a series of confrontations and subjugation against demons, the constant threat to *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* power. The warrior goddesses, malevolent, fierce and aggressive on the surface appear self-sufficient and at par with, or above the dominant discourse of gender, but, on a closer look turn out to be a matter defined, determined and conditioned by the patriarchal prerogatives.

The case in focus could be explained by the very myth narrating the origin of the Goddess[31] in the context of the story of the annihilation of Mahiṣāsura. The goddess variously named as Aṁbikā, Bhadrakālī, Caṇḍikā, Mahālakṣmī and Mahādevī or generically as Devī, is created out of the compounded anger from the various gods in the form of light (*tejas*) that came out, from which she took form. Further, She is presented with various weapons and is also adorned, (metaphorically, empowered), by the Gods. Despite the attempt of the sectarian *Śākta* in 'representing' the Goddess to have a power above the Gods (since only Devī can accomplish the task of vanquishing Mahiṣāsura), her origin itself is constructed and willed into existence for the purpose of coercive action against the *asura*,[32] so that the power-status of patriarchy is restored. Through out the text of *Devī-Māhātmya* the various feats goddesses accomplish remain appropriated by the power of gods. The myth relating Saptamātṛkās is a clearer example, which awaits consideration at a later section. The induction of *vibhūti-vāda* and/or *avatāra-vāda* from the *Vaiṣṇava* sphere into Śāktism makes it easy for the mythographer to link up the disparate myth material and give it an appearance of coherence. Viṣṇu's foremost personality trait being the personification of *kṣatriya* coercive authority, played up as a redeemer-saviour against the *asura* disruptions in the mythico-political scheme of neo-Brāhmanism, spills over on to the role of the goddess as a militant warrior force, in the Mahiṣa episode. This particular aspect can be seen as being shared by Śiva too, in his suppression of *asura* power, though relatively less in its extensiveness.

Further, another primary function of the goddess myths exemplify mediative syncreticism, a mediation between the irreconcilable opposing theological power conceptions; Śiva and Viṣṇu, and between almost all the Vedic and post-Vedic male theophanies. From Śiva the goddesses derived the dichotomous elements of malevolent-destructive and benevolent-creative traits, ascetic and domestic features, (allomorphs — personal and abstract characteristics) and above all the *asura*-killing function. The uncouth, outlandish, non-conformist personality trait of Śiva finds its female counterparts in the myths of Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā. Vaiṣṇavism moulds the female imagery primarily on the lines of militancy; the periodical opposition to the disruptive demons (the *avatāra-vāda*), but, on an intimate familial realm as the personification of his glorious material status; the Śrī-Lakṣmī, whose sculptural portrayals often so obviously reflects the actual familial position of woman in a mythical garb, either at the feet or on the chest of Viṣṇu. Both reflects the appropriation and subordination on a mundane, mortal plane. Yet, the philosophical rationalizations, attempt to raise her position as an equal to Viṣṇu, which is a matter of tokenism, the analysis of which could be left at this stage for the present context.

The goddesses as lovers or as wives remain fully appropriated and subsumed within the power of Viṣṇu and Śiva, which comes to aid the philosophical rationalisation of subordination of *jīvātmā* to the *paramātmā*. In socio-political terms the *bhakti* mode of relationship between god and devotee, exemplify the non-violent means of social and political control.[33] However, unlike the possibilities that *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* religions explored in the area of *bhakti* mode, the sphere of the goddesses continued to remain exempted from such a possibility. Her devotees never seeked a lover in her, but primarily looked up to her as a protective mother; idealization leading to essentialisation of the gender.

The schema of power relations — subsumption and assimilation of goddesses under the dominant discourses of gender and class, delineated above, however remains to be reconsidered while analyzing the implication of *Sāṁkhya* and *Tantra* philosophical traditions in relation to the goddesses in ancient India.

Acculturation of Female Gender : Sāṁkhya, Tantra and the Goddesses

The two primary components that characterize the goddess material in India, as elsewhere, are the reflection and 'representation' of the concerns with life and death; fertility and dissolution, abundance and famine, well-being and disease; upon the body of the female. Translated in economic terms of ancient India these stand for two central aspects upon which life depended — agriculture and war.[34] In socio-political terms, these interrelations denote the agricultural production on the one hand, and on the other, the coercive appropriation of the surplus produce through war, as booty or as taxes. In this sense the functions of the agricultural producers and the warrior kings, both as economic realities, were the foundations upon which the cultural institutions, including the iconic representations developed. This interrelationship and dichotomy between life and death; agriculture and war, in their socio-political and economic implications is of course not to abolish the importance of these as unavoidable realities determined by nature's law and influencing the formation of mythology and icons. However, the concern with life and death considered here in relation to the goddesses is primarily as a matter of cultural and civilizational projects of the dominant classes in ancient India.

Considering the paramount place of the female principle in Tāntric practices, and *Sāṁkhya* philosophical system, it has been observed that the origin and development of Śakti cult is primarily embedded within these traditions, the exact origins of which remain an area of speculation. D.P. Chattopadhyaya convincingly argues that the characteristic practices and fundamental concepts of *Tantra* and *Sāṁkhya* have evolved from the archaic agricultural magic of the primitive people.[35]

It may be conceded that the earliest forms of goddesses conceptions are dichotomous, related to the cognitive knowledge of the productive-aspect of nature, and death and cessation, too, as an aspect of nature, and thus both came to be related to female. Hence, the assertion of re-generative potential of nature and female; the preoccupation with the continuation of life against death, and the need for multiplication of life, came to be based on the above knowledge of the dichotomy of life and death. Further, the fact of the continuity of life and death, comprehended at the early stages of human development, interlink the two fundamental basis of life — nature and female. The predictable corollary to it is seen in the perception of the parallelism of these in the female bodily functions, led to the identification of the two entities; nature and female body, as part and parcel of the same phenomenon. This, and the translation of such concern on to the female body, as trope symbolising nature, and the propitiative ritual worship of these, possibly was a universal occurrence.

In *Sāṁkhya* and *Tantra* the female principle is named as *Prakṛti*, literarlly meaning nature; the primordial material/body that envelops the spirit, the 'essence' in the later interpretations. These have tremendous significance in the development of the divine female sphere in the historical period, since the identification of fertility in the soil and in the woman, the very foundation of sustenance, finds its various ramifications in the religious and cultural practices. In ancient India, possibly more than anywhere else, the body of the woman came to be encoded and read as analogous to nature.

The conflated cultural sign of nature and the feminine is a product of an ideology of socio-political and economic appropriation and exploitation of the producer; the nature/woman and the agricultural producer. Śrī-Lakṣmī, and many goddess theophanies and their epithets, including that of Śakti; the very power of action, in the periods of high civilizational advancement came to function within the prerogatives defined by the dominant power centres in the society.[36]

However, can the original *Sāṁkhya* and *Tantra*, and the later esoteric sphere of Tāntrism, be interpreted as also falling within the above category of subsumption? The subversive mode of rituals and the general anti-Vedic character of Tāntrism suggest the possibility of the alternative interpretation. The disregard for *varṇa* stipulations and the place it assigns to women in the ritual practices are only two obvious indications of its non-conformity with the dominant social norms. Yet, it is a fact that the basic principles of both *Sāṁkhya* and *Tantra* also have got accultured into almost all the different religious traditions in the ancient and medieval periods in various modalities, which also makes the task of probing into the original stages of development and understanding their characteristics rather tedious, and conclusions remain rather tentative. Further, almost all the original literary sources have been lost, and D.P. Chattopadhyaya points out the problems of having to depend upon the opponent's viewpoints, the idealism of *Vedānta*.[37]

The theorizations of D.P. Chattopadhyaya on these twin systems are grounded within his larger project of presenting a case for the ancient Indian materialist philosophy — the *Lokāyata*, within its material conditions. Etymologically, *Lokāyata* means 'that which is prevalent among people' and also 'that which is essentially this-worldly'.[38] The most conspicuous feature of this primitive world-outlook appears to be *deha-vāda*, the view that the material human body (*deha*) is the microcosm of the universe, along with a cosmogony attributing the origin of the universe to the 'union of the male and the female'.[39] Though not formulated theoretically, the beginning of *Lokāyata* is traced back to this cognition, which is prior to the development of spiritualism and philosophy proper. The earliest stratum of Tāntric rituals is traced back to the primitive agricultural magic. Following Briffault and Thomson, Chattopadhyaya argues that, " because agriculture was the discovery of women, the initial stage of the agricultural economy created the material conditions for the social superiority of female."[40] Further answering questions regarding the material basis of the primitive *deha-vāda*, he traces these to fertility magic of the early agriculturist, which rested on the assumption that the productivity of the earth and the female can be enhanced or induced by ritualistic copulation, symbolically or in actual terms.[41] The absence of any concern with spirit is the most obvious feature of this world-view. The original Tāntrism, thus was magical and was rooted in manual labour but the later development of spiritualistic and idealistic outlook presupposed a separation of thought from action; of mental labour from manual labour, along with the social degradation of the latter and the prime importance attached to the spirit.[42]

According to relatively later sources of *Sāṁkhya*, such as *Sāṁkhya Kārikā*, the world is considered essentially as constituted by the material. In the context of understanding the nature of causality of this world, the cause that is inferred is identified as *prakṛti* or *pradhāna*, the primeval matter. The primeval matter prior to its evolution into the visible material world is considered as *avyakta* or the unmanifest, formless, undifferentiated, limitless and ubiquitous.[43] The logical status of *puruṣa*, in relation to *prakṛti* is secondary or *a-pradhāna*. The epithet *udāsīna* described it as 'indifferent', implying that *puruṣa* was totally indifferent to the actual world-process.[44] Hence, *pradhāna* alone is considered responsible for all causation, based on the *svabhāva-vāda* — the rational processes of natural laws. According to *Caraka Saṁhitā*, *puruṣa* is only a part of *prakṛti*; meaning that the consciousness as potentially contained in the primeval matter.[45]

Chattopadhyaya argues that the anomalous and inconsequential place of *puruṣa* in the original *Sāṁkhya* ideology was a result of a similar position of the male in matriarchal society, which itself is only an "explicit philosophical statement of the theoretical assumptions implicit in Tāntrism"[46] the origin of which was also the matriarchal conditions. Considering that the supreme emphasis on the female principle remained as the most conspicuous feature of later Tāntrism, while the *Sāṁkhya* concept of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* went through very many interpretations, appropriations and modifications in the hands of spiritualists, the various ramifications of Tāntrism in relation to the development of neo-Brāhmanism remains to be addressed.

M.C. Joshi on the basis of epigraphic and literary evidences, almost conclusively proves the prevalence of *Śākta* Tāntrism in the Gupta age and the close association of Mātṛkā worship with this tradition.[47] Though the word *Tantra* in its developed and technical sense is somewhat late in origin, reference to mystic ritualism and esoteric practices more or less similar to those of developed Tāntrism as practiced by different sects can be gleaned from literary and archaeological sources belonging to the early centuries of Christian era.[48] Quoting Si-Yu-Ki, J.N.Banerjea elaborates upon the practices of magical exorcisms done by *Mahāyāna* Buddhists and *Pāśupata*s. Further, on the basis of *Bṛhat Saṁhitā*, the Gangadhar inscription of Viśvavarman,and the twelve-armed sculpture of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī at Udayagiri, the scholar confirms the prevalence of Tāntrism during fifth century AD.[49]

A predominant non-Vedic source that has been subsumed into the formation of neo-Brāhmanical religion derives from the Tāntric mode. The conditions for the absorption of the various aspects of aboriginal religion, including that of Tāntrism, and the acculturisation of a number of gods and goddesses, are the result of the Brāhmanical colonization of the tribal areas through the process of land grants.[50] To quote R.S. Sharma, "the problem of the origin of tāntrism can be looked at from different angles : acculturation of the peripheral areas through land grants to monks and brāhmaṇas, the aboriginal background of the tantric mother goddesses, the antiquity and distribution of the pīṭhas, the association of the Śabaras, Mātaṅgas, etc., with different Tantras, the dates and provenance of the tāntric texts, and finally the survivals of tāntrism. All these considerations lead to the single conclusion that this religion originated in the outer, tribal circle and not in Madhyadésa."[51]

Considering that the magical rituals of fertility was originally the domain of women, a pertinent question remains as to what happened to the ritual practices of women when men took over the actual agricultural operations. This could be considered neither as an abrupt change of the significance of the women in the rituals nor without the traces being left behind of the original practices. The concern with fertility of the earth, the ritualistic propitiation for the best results from the agricultural operations and the surplus agricultural products as such, and the sense of well-being on an unesoteric plane came to be symbolized in a concept such as Śrī-Lakṣmī in the historical period. Structural analysis of myths and epithets of this deity prove that social conflicts were played out to appropriate the surplus agricultural production by different power centres. Though at a relatively later date this Goddess came to be exclusively possessed by Viṣṇu, implying a total appropriation of the productive forces by the *kṣatriya* class, whereas, originally she belonged to the *asura* anti-gods, Kubera, the Buddhist vaiśya class, etc.

Śakti Myth — A Retake : Iconology of Saptamātṛkā

Only two earlier attempts can be quoted while considering the iconology of Mātṛkā sculptures; first, an article by Michael W. Meister and second, the book on the subject by Katherine A. Harper.[52] The essay of Meister has two purposes; firstly, that it attempts to analyze the positional power relation between *Śākta* and *Śaiva* cults within the context of the evolution of Mātṛkā images, and secondly, it takes into consideration the distinct regional traditions in sculpture, while the intention on the whole continues to remain that of deriving cultic meanings on the basis of the latter. Harper's project, though more extensive, only address the evolution of Saptamātṛkā symbolism and religious and cultural meanings as its main objective. A historical grounding of the iconography has remained beyond the scope of both these attempts. The discrepancies between the literary and the visual manifestations have been pointed out in both these, but at the same time, neither evolve a valid methodological framework nor develop an adequately validated address point so as to deal with the contradictory 'representational' elements in sculptures and literature. Hypothetically, from the point of view of present study the differences between the words and images, are reflective of the historical dialectics in the evolution of the idea in relation to the imagery. The "rhetoric of images", according to W.J.T. Mitchell is in a double sense — first, as a study of "what images say", that is, the ways in which they speak for themselves by persuading, telling stories, or describing; and second, as a study of "what to say about the images", the writings on art as such that describe and interpret symbolic or narrative meanings, (as to what are their historical meaning levels mean, implying the ideological position of the historian while critically studying the icons).[53] It is in the second sense, that is, iconology as a study of what to say about the images, that Meister and Harper leaves out the historical meaning levels, and to which the following analysis is addressed to.

The present section proposes to analyze the multi-layered concept of Saptamātṛkās, as 'represented' in the Purāṇic myths and icons, and as 'representations' within the historical development of class and gender conflicts. The iconological interpretation, while locating their warrior and fertility personality spheres in literary and sculptural traditions, is contextualised within the already discussed mythico-political subsumptive ideology of *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* power nexus over producer classes and female gender. Further, in this section an attempt is made to clearly distinguish the spheres of dichotomous elements; malevolence and benevolence, and the male and female principles in the Mātṛkā imagery, so as to locate the historically played out dialectical process and its resolution in the theology of *Śākta*s.

The Purāṇic descriptions of Mātṛkās are invariably enmeshed in the descriptions of gruesome war of *Deva*s (inclusive of Devīs, as far as the dominant power position is concerned) against *asura*s.[54] The motif symbolically illustrate the class conflict and the subsumption of the other from the neo-Brāhmanical ideological premise.[55] In literary narrative context, the ferocious, militant Mātṛkās function as the agents of the power (laterally, *śakti*) of the *Deva*s in annihilating the *asura*s. However, their representation in sculptural portrayals (primarily as icons meant for ritualistic worship),[56] consciously avoid any direct reference to the literary narrative, which, however is present as a foil to the images (the acquaintance of which is presupposed and being pervasive); a reminder, so to say, in enabling one to imagine the archetypal function and power of images in matters of coercion.

Since there exists a dichotomy between the iconic sculptural portrayals and the personality of the Saptamātṛkās that manifests in Purāṇic literature, it may be conceded that the latter is a "significant other",[57] or a complimentary deviation from the former. In other words, since there is a considerable difference between the two, it is possible that both the traditions followed certain autonomous conventions of their own, while also lending validation to one another. However, as far as the premise of iconological interpretation is concerned, both the conventions are located within the neo-Brāhmanical ideology. Iconification is essential for the idea to become worshipful, where as the literary narrative is a constant reminder of the purpose/objective of the worship. Thus combining two essential functions; iconification and narration, the totality of the tradition of Mātṛkās function in two autonomous levels of distinct meaning levels, yet both function as complementary to one another.

Similar principle could be extended in understanding the conflation of motherly and the warrior aspect of Mātṛkās. In sculptural portrayals they are primarily maternal, benign goddesses. But, Mātṛkās in the narrative context of the Purāṇic myths are the militant and ferocious opponents of the demons in the battlefield, assisting either Devī or Śiva in their wars. This is concomitant with the theological concept of Mātṛkās as feminine potentialities the way the *Purāṇa*s locate them indicate parallelism with the myth of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī. The earliest known sculptural representation of the latter dates from the first century BC,[58] whereas Mātṛkā portrayals are made almost five hundred years later. The sculptures of Durgā, belonging to Kuṣāṇa, Gupta periods, Deccan and South India, portray her in a narrative mode, though the iconic variety of the deity has also been prevalent. Whereas, Mātṛkās right at their inception and in the later presentations have always been presented as icons with hardly any indication of the narrative content. Thus, paradoxically the Purāṇic description, (except for certain iconographic spcificities) and the sculptural representations, very rarely converge on exact terms. In sculptural portrayals they are compassionate mothers; except Cāmuṇḍā (and Vārāhī in certain examples) none of the other goddesses are terrible looking. Even Cāmuṇḍā in certain examples (Ellora) is benevolent and motherly, or she the epitome of death, is also represented as gracefully dancing in the company of the other Mātṛkās. In the sculptural portrayals, often, they are endowed with aristocratic import, with least suggestion of their aggressive personality, when compared, for instance, with the representations of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī. However, invariably all the mothers, apart from the children they hold, also carry deadly weapons of war. As 'storied' symbols, these are reminders of the power of coercion, punishment and authority, as mentioned earlier, and are the constant validation of the Purāṇic account of militancy.

The motherhood of the Mātṛkās, however, do not derive its support from the *Purāṇa* descriptions. Even if it is considered as having its genesis from the general cultural factor; that all the goddesses in Brāhmanical tradition are *ipso facto* worshipped as mothers for them being females, from the mythological point of view the question remains as to whom they are mothers. In fact, *Purāṇa*s do not mention their motherhood, but portray them primarily as the *śakti*s of gods. Whether the motherhood is implied in the conception of *śakti* is a matter to concern with, but, considering the prototype conception of Saptamātṛkās in *Veda*s as mothers of the universe, a conflation and layering of ideas such as these during the neo-Brāhmanical revival could be speculated upon.[59] This is significant, since it is always the familial goddesses of Purāṇic mythology, such as Pārvatī, who are associated with child bearing and protection, testified amply in mythology, even though not so frequently in sculpture. As far as the 'autonomous' goddesses conception such as Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī is concerned, the motherhood is culturally read as an implicit meaning, in terms of her being the protective power against the āsuric forces. As a result, though the goddess is never imagined as carrying a child, the malevolence and the ferocious nature is read as a protective benevolence to the worshipper (metaphorically, to the devotee-child). This, by implication suggests the aspect of universal motherhood implied in the conception of *Śakti*. But unlike in the conception of Durgā, Saptamātṛkā are militant but appeased for the purpose of iconification, with the minimum suggestion of aggression, encoded in the *āyudha*s they carry.

Another source, as far as the motherly disposition of the sculptural adaptation of Mātṛkās are concerned, (apart from the maternal Vedic heptads), are the maternal goddess in connection with the birth of Skanda. The *Mahābhārata* myth relate the maternal protection lent by the Kṛttikās, Gaṅgā, Pārvatī and the different Bālagrahas to Skanda. Interestingly, they all become motherly to the emerging new god against the wish of the patriarchy, particularly Indra. Apart from the point of acculturation of Skanda and different mothers into neo-Brāhmanical pantheon, the myth also indicate taming of the dangerous Bālagrahas through the infant for the benefit of the neo-Brāhmanical cultic orientations. D.D. Kosambi touches upon this basic social processes when he interprets the myth in terms of the patriarchal control over the subaltern deities. To quote, " It would appear that the Mothers were easier to control through their child Skanda . . . invented for that special purpose . . . than by the imposition of violently hostile patriarchal cults."[60] If the hypothesis is that the invention of Saptamātṛkā iconography has been derived from the sculptural proto-types of Bālagrahas from the Kuṣāṇa period,[61] it could be suggested that the presentation of children to each of the Mātṛkās also exemplify the patriarchal prerogative of essentialising the goddesses in terms of their motherhood, lending the iconification process a certain balance between two essential purposes; the agents of fertility and the death aspects. In fact, at least two Purāṇic texts attests the attempt of the gods in appeasing and taming the ferocious, destructive and blood thirsty Mātṛkās, a reflection of the iconification process via mythology.[62]

The developments in the goddess cult in the post-Vedic period are of greater significance in the context of Saptamātṛkās. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* reference of seven tongues of Agni as Kālī, Karālī etc.[63] is more specific and relates itself more closely to the Purāṇic concept of goddesses. This is the earliest instance of specifically identifying seven goddesses with names from the Vedic sources other than the names of the seven rivers in *Ṛgveda*. Yet another heptad concept found in the *Veda* and which get modified in the later periods is that of Kṛttikās. The stellar bodies, Kṛttikās (Pleiades) in the *Mahābhārata* get redefined as Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnīs and become foster mothers of the emerging godhead Skanda. Their theological and philosophical import and influence as far as Saptamātṛkās are concerned, are limited. Their prevalence is confined with. The identity of Kṛttikās in the Kuṣāṇa sculptures is comingled with the multifarious Lokamātā/Bālagraha tradition. It may be noted that at no point, the Kṛttikās assume significance as worshipful cult deities; while, the Lokamātā/Bālagraha tradition commanded respect and worship, being the deities of child birth and maternity. However, iconographically, the motherhood of Saptamātṛkā tradition in sculpture is a logical extension of the Lokamātā/Bālagraha representations of Kuṣāṇa period.

The co-existence of male and female principles in the Saptamātṛkā conception is yet another dichotomous element. Another locus of the concept of Mātṛkās is located at this point; the aspect of transformation that is effected up on the Brāhmanic gods in conceiving them as the feminine potentialities. This process pre-eminently indicate the *Śākta* prerogative and 'autonomy' over the patriarchal god-heads. In fact, the masculine is totally replaced, and in the iconic imagination there come to exist a complete adaptation of the former into an all encompassing feminization of their personalities. However, in the *Śākta* theology this is effected through a mediation, that is by the transformation of the already existing male god-heads into the feminine; the *Śakti*, the omnipotent factor, and not by inventing absolutely new conceptions of goddesses.

The *Devī-Māhātmya* is the earliest available text which establishes the pre-eminence of the goddess in general and Mātṛkās in particular, which still forms the core of *ṣaṭacakra*.[64] The text is not generally referred to as Tāntric, yet, the fundamental goal of Yogic-Tāntric-*sādhanā*, namely *mukti* or the 'liberation from time' is promised by Mahāmāyā. Mārkaṇḍeya introduces the king and the merchant to the Devī as "It is she who, when propitiated, becomes a boon giver to the human being for their final knowledge, the cause of final and eternal liberation, she is the cause of the bondage of transmigration and the sovereign over all lords".[65] The primary goal of Tāntric *sādhanā*; the psycho-physical practice of *ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda*, is in achieving *mukti*. The Saptamātṛkā constellation, as such may be interpreted as a parallel to the *ṣaṭ-cakras*,[66] wherein the six *cakras* are the directional path for raising the consciousness to the seventh point (*sahasrāra*) where it could be released from body and time. Though referred to as breaking six power centres (*ṣat-cakra-bheda*), the Tāntric *yoga-sādhanā*, thus involves the awakening of seven *śakti*s, conceived as residing in the seven *padma*s in the *suṣumnā*, the last and the seventh being the *sahasrāra*.

Although the *Purāṇa*s do not testify the Yogic-Tāntric origin and meaning of Saptamātṛkās, this need not detain us from exploring the philosophical rationale of the these goddesses. The essential conclusions of all Tāntric *śāstra*s is that the feminine principle is all inclusive *śakti;* the power which pervades all things and all action.[67] In *Devī-Māhātmyam* itself Caṇḍī is praised as "O Thou all-pervading Devī, Thou art the Śakti in all things spiritual (*sat*) or gross (*asat*), whatsoever or wheresoever they be."[68] The psycho-physical practices of Tāntrism (*yogasādhanā)* is an effort to realize the ultimate feminine principle; the *śakti* in oneself. This *śakti*, the fundamental power is called the *kula kuṇḍalinī* residing in the *mūlādharā cakra*.[69] The *yogasādhanā* is called the *ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda*. The seven *padmas* on the *suṣumnā*-cord are the seven seats of femininity, which according to Tāntrism, is inherent in every human being.[70] When aroused, *kuṇḍalinī śakti* reaches the *ājñā cakra*, and the practitioner attains *sārūpya mukti*, wherein he/she assumes a form similar to that of the Goddess. Further, when the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* reaches *sahasradalapadma*, the practitioner achieves *sāyūjya mukti* which is an undivided union with the goddess. Everything dissolves into non-duality, because according to *vāmācāra,* everything originates and returns into the all absorbing femininity. Thus, in the *Śākta* Tāntric *Yoga* practices, the dual principles of male and female are unified, and the omnipotent femininity comes to be realized.

There is a specific significance of Tāntric *yogasādhanā* and the quest for realization of the feminine principle, as far as the origin of the concept of Saptamātṛkā is concerned. The Saptamātṛkā divinities as the *śakti* potentials of male gods indicate the conscious attempt of the theologians in transforming the male identities of the Brāhmanical gods into that of the goddesses. The Saptamātṛkā divinities consist of six Deva *śakti*s and one Devī *śakti*, making it an integrated group of seven goddesses. In each of them the male personality, like a shadow remains, while the femininity as such seems to be the result of transfiguration; analogically similar to the transformation of the Tāntric *sādhaka* in uniting the male and female principles. The dichotomous personalities of the Mātṛkās, thus interpreted as reflecting *Śākta* Tāntric practices imply a conscious attempt on the part of theologians in deliberately inventing new forms of the goddesses, which according to the *Devī-Māhātmya*, the Goddess herself is made to rationalize as her own manifestations, "I am all alone in the world here, who else is there besides me? See, O Vile one, these goddesses, who are but my own powers, entering into my own self!" Then all the goddesses were absorbed into the body of the Devī.[71] Further, the *ṣaṭ-cakra*s, the seven lotuses of the *suṣumnā* cord, interpreted as the seats of femininity, suggest a parallelism between the *yogasādhanā* of Tāntrism and the tradition of the Saptamātṛkā worship.[72] *Tantra*s mention the seven Śaktis, Kulakuṇḍalinī, Vāruṇī, Lākinī, etc., each residing in a lotus.[73] According M.C. Joshi, the *maṇḍala karma* mentioned in *Bṛhat Saṁhitā* refers to the *yantra-*

vidhāna associated with Mātṛkā and *Śākta Tantrācāra*. J.N. Banerjea suggests that the *maṇḍala karma* too meant the Tāntric *cakra* (Bhairavī?) and the ritualistic order of it.[74]

Historically considering, the *Tantra* tradition proper, the original female sphere of esoteric fertility magic ritual is interpreted as to having come to be adjusted to the patriarchal conditions. Presenting anthropological and historical data, Chattopadhyaya argues that in the changed condition of male takeover of the agricultural production, the male practitioners of fertility rituals could not do away with the women's functions.[75] Propitiation of the female principle could be performed only by an identity change, in most simple terms, say, by a change in the outfits, or, in sophisticated terms by psychologically assuming the female role by a total identification with the female principle. The latter is attested by Tāntric texts.[76] Following the same line of logic, it could argued that the feminization of the male gods by the *Śākta*s is an adjustment/ mediation within the changed patriarchal conditions within the neo-Brāhmanical religion.

This is significant, since the paramount place the female principle occupies in Tāntric traditions and in the early *Sāṁkhya* system of ideas greatly contradicts with the actual power position of goddesses in the neo-Brāhmanic myths, structurally anomalous and subservient to patriarchy. As pointed out by Emily Kearns, the mythological traditions of female deities will have a bearing on their human counterparts.[77] The myths narrating Goddesses as wives, in the personal human details or as the abstract concept such as *śakti* of a particular god, fully exemplify this proposition.[78] But at times the power hierarchy may appear to be reversed when gods are transfigured as *śakti*s, such as the case in Saptamātṛkā conception, or when *Śākta* sectarianism makes *śakti* an inevitable and fully balanced counterpart to the male deity.[79] Hence, the noticeable supremacy of the goddess in *Tantra* theology cannot be considered as a reflection of the social supremacy or equality of women in the class society, for the social position of women in the ancient India, as documented in written sources does not present a bright picture. Further, the superior position of female shamanesses called *bhairavī*s and *yoginī*s within the exclusive communities of *Śākta* Tāntrics is an exception, which cannot be taken as an indicator contradicting to the larger social reality of subsumption of women.

This locus of Saptamātṛkā concept; the formation of ideational lineament of Śakti, rooted within the ideological view of the emerging Tāntric *Śākta* religion has wider implications within neo-Brāhmanical theological rationalisations. The manifestation of seven Śaktis in one constellation implies an attitude of cult syncreticism. The evidences of the heptad concepts prior to the formation of Purāṇic Saptamātṛkās (in Indus Valley culture, Vedic, and the epic sources), indicate varied meaning levels, which lent validations to the emergence of the Saptamātṛkā concept in the fourth-fifth century AD in literature and plastic representations. At the same time, the reason for the emergence of the concept, theologically and philosophically are to be located within the formation of *Śākta* ideology, though, the genesis of the concept as such owed itself to various meanings and symbolisms derived from the prototypes. A pertinent question to be considered in relation to the proto-Saptamātṛkā materials is whether or not it is possible to identify the concept of *śakti* in these. The idea as such is reflected in the post-Vedic literary sources of goddess cult,[80] but assumes ideological consolidation only at the time when the *Purāṇa*s are written. The coming together of the six *Deva Śakti*s and one *Devī Śakti* in association with Śiva, Gaṇeśa (or Kārttikeya) in one inseparable unit in plastic representations is a distinct phenomenon, wherein the importance of proto-types themselves are marginal.

The development of the Saptamātṛkā concept coincides with the rise of sectarian Śakti cult with Durgā as the principal cult deity, whose worship is evident from the Kuṣāṇa period onwards. The early icons of this deity hailing from Mathura point to an emerging iconographic type which manifests in a full-fledged manner in the Gupta period, at Udayagiri.[81] What is of significance in the present context is the parallelism in the concepts of Mahiṣāsuramardinī Durgā and that of Saptamātṛkās. According to the description in *Devī-Māhātmya*, Durgā is willed into existence by the gods, and is formed out of the composite energies of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and the other Devas. The Devas saw the concentration of energies (*tejas*) like a mountain blazing excessively, pervading all the quarters with its flames. Then that unique light produced from the bodies of all the Devas, pervading the three worlds with its lusture, combined into one and became a female form.[82] From Śiva her face, from Yama her hair, from Viṣṇu her arms from Candra her breasts, from Indra her waist, from Varuṇa her shanks and thighs, from Earth her hips, from Brahmā her feet, from Sūrya her toes, from Vasus her fingers, from Kubera her nose, from Prajāpati her teeth, from Agni her three eyes, from the light of the two Sandhyās her eye-brows and from Vāyu her ears.[83] Further, Śiva armed her with the trident, Viṣṇu with the *cakra*, Varuṇa with the conch, Agni with the spear, Maruts with a bow and two quivers, Indra with the *vajra* and bell, Yama with a staff, Varuṇa with a noose, Brahmā with the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu*, Sūrya with rays on all the pores on her skin, Kāla with sword and shield, milky ocean with adornments, Viśvakarman with an axe and an armour, Haimavatī with a lion, Kubera with a cup full of wine, and Śeṣa with a serpent necklace.[84] Thus, the concept of Durgā in *Devī-Māhātmya* is composite, wherein the powers (*tejas*) of Brāhmaṇic gods are amalgamated into the making of the single idea of Devī.

The most important goddess concept that emerged before Saptamātṛkās which greatly influenced its concretisation is that of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Durgā embodies in her, the culmination of the acculturation in goddess-worship in ancient India. This all powerful, militant warrior goddess implies cult syncreticism between all Brāhmanical god-heads, by embodying in one single instance, all the multiple energies that flowed-in, and thereby effecting a subsumption of goddess within the gender domination.

Though chronologically the invention of Saptamātṛkās occurs slightly later than that of Durgā, they evolve through parallel developments. Both have their origination based on the emanatory principle and the will of the gods, and are connected in being the embodiment of the feminine potentialities of male gods. In Durgā, the diverse energies converge to form a single totality, whereas in the latter the energies remain independent, yet bound by a condition of totality in terms of the number seven. The formulation of the goddesses in a group of seven has a bearing upon the more ancient tradition of Vedic heptads, which during the neo-Brāhmanical phase also possibly meant a number of totality and completion of a cycle. The tendency to group in seven, in the epic and Purāṇic references[85] possibly indicate a cultural predilection, since it like other odd numbers also stand for auspiciousness.

The Saptamātṛkās as *śakti*s of the Gods manifest in sculpture from the late fourth century AD or the beginning of fifth century AD. In all probability such a concept had already emerged in the theological realm, but we are unable to accurately date the existing literary sources. However, it can be safely presumed that, at the beginning of the organized sectarian *Śākta* cult, during the Gupta period, the perceptive theologians seem to have formulated the concept of Deva *śakti*s in association with the most terrible and fearful personality of Devī as Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā and also in association with Śiva the consort of Devī, and Gaṇeśa (or, Skanda), the newly incorporated sons in the Śiva-Pārvatī family, making the group truly a composite whole.

It would be pertinent to clarify the rationale behind the choosing of six Deva *śakti*s out of the many Brāhmanical gods. The criteria in choosing the Deva *śakti*s counted as Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī and Aindrī appears to be based on the popularity and importance of their male counterparts at the time when the Saptamātṛkā configuration was formulated. Among the counterpart gods, Śiva and Viṣṇu had already attained their independent prominence as important cult deities by the time Saptamātṛkā concept was formulated. Formidable sectarian cults had already developed around their personalities, sculptural, inscriptional and literary data from the pre-Christian era through the Kuṣāṇa and later times testify this. The incorporation of Brahmā, who did not have an independent cult, is also logical, since he occupied an important place as the creator god in the neo-Brāhmanical triad. In the case of Kaumārī, her counterpart Skanda had been developing into prominence from the Kuṣāṇa times, till the time when he was absorbed into the *Śaiva* pantheon. The male counterpart of Vārāhī, Varāha too, as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu had great popularity during Gupta period, more than any other incarnations of Viṣṇu.[86] Aindrī is the only feminine potential of a Vedic god who is incorporated among the Saptamātṛkās. Apart from the logic of adopting the potential of one major Vedic gods, the induction as such appear to be based on a certain other consideration; in the epics and *Purāṇa*s Indra is the king of *Devaloka*. However, there is no evidence to consider a sectarian cult of Indra, during or after the fifth century AD comparable to other gods in the configuration. It is also to be noted that Sūrya, whose cult was prominent from Kuṣāṇa times onwards, did not inspire a Mātṛkā counterpart. As far as the cult syncreticism is concerned there is a perfect symmetry in the Saptamātṛkā configuration. The two *Vaiṣṇava Śākti*s (Vaiṣṇavī and Vārāhī) are balanced by two *Śaiva Śākti*s (Maheśvarī and Kaumārī). Even though *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* syncreticism is indicated at the realm of the choice of the deities, the totality of sculptural configurations prove a fundamental *Śaiva* domination over *Vaiṣṇava* and *Śākta*. The Saptamātṛkā sculptures, from the early times, are an essential component in the iconographic programme of *Śaiva* caves and temples. Further, some form of Śiva, Vīreśa, Vīṇādhara, Naṭeśa or Dakṣiṇāmūrti, invariably form an integral part of the Mātṛkā iconographic scheme, which is also supported by the *Śilpa Śāstra*s. In certain regional tradition the dominance of Śiva is further enhanced by locating him at the centre of Mātṛkā group,[87] and in certain other cases by adding another important form of Śiva-Kālabhairava. The implied cult syncretism in Saptamātṛkā configuration, has a special bearing in the *Śākta* religion, since the goddess is 'represented' as a mediator/tool in levelling out differences and conflicts among the sectarian divinities, even though the paramountcy of feminine principle remain as the primary aspect of *Śākta* ideology. The close *Śaiva* affiliation in the development of goddess cult from early times can be seen giving rise to the dominance of the former over the other denominations. This, in the Purāṇic myth becomes the theme of Mātṛkās assisting Śiva in his war against Andhakāsura, and finds its reflection further in the portrayal of the Saptamātṛkās in sculptured reliefs of the *Andhakāsuravadha* theme.

The incorporation of Gaṇeśa among the Saptamātṛkās too throws light on the neo-Brāhmanical acculturation. The *Purāṇa*s are absolutely silent regarding this sculptural inclusion, although *Śilpa Śāstra*s recommend his presence. The skewed relationship of the Purāṇic narrative and the sculptural representation of Saptamātṛkās is further evidenced by the inclusion of Gaṇeśa among Mātṛkās.

The god-head Gaṇeśa, like Skanda has very obscure origins. Gaṇeśa is not found mentioned in the *Veda*s or in the *Mahābhārata*, but appears first in the *Purāṇa*s.[88] Vināyaka, one of the many names of Gaṇeśa, according to R.G. Bhandarkar, is a collective noun denoting certain 'imps and evil spirits' as evidenced in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra* and the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*.[89] D.P. Chattopadhyaya clearly outlines the process as to how this deity of the primitive socieites was accultured and promoted to become a respectable neo-Brāhmanic god.[90]

There could be two reasons for the inclusion of Gaṇeśa along with Mātṛkās. Firstly, Gaṇeśa as Vighneśvara is the remover of obstacles, and secondly, he being incorporated as the son of Śiva and Pārvatī via mythology, enabled an additional *Śaiva* dominance. The validation of the second possibility is evident at Ravulaphadi cave (Aihole) and Elephanta, where Gaṇeśa and Skanda are simultaneously present as child gods along with Mātṛkās and Śiva. Iconographically, this was a place solely occupied by the latter during Kuṣāṇa period (with regard to his Kṛttikā and Bālagraha connections). The inclusion of the deity among some of the early Saptamātṛkā sculptures during fifth-sixth centuries AD however is with due consideration for his status in the *Śaiva* pantheon, where his former associations are gradually relegated, and his new position along with Gaṇeśa is legitimized, as evident at Elephanta and Aihole. From the sixth century AD onwards, superseding Skanda, Gaṇeśa becomes an integral part of Saptamātṛkā groups. However, in western India the early examples show preference for Kārttikeya to Gaṇeśa. By the mid-sixth century AD the convention of Śiva and Gaṇeśa accompanying Mātṛkās becomes a pan-Indian feature which continues throughout the later periods.

Leaving aside the details of acculturation, what is relevant to the present context is that Gaṇeśa as a full-fledged god is clearly established by the Gupta period. As early as AD 400, in Cave

No. 2 and Cave No. 6 at Udayagiri, he is present along with other important Brāhmanical gods. Alice Getty suggests that, Gaṇeśa is placed along with Mātṛkās, in order that the devotees could worship him first to gain his favourable intervention in their devotions to the Mātṛkās.[91]

Among the regional preferences for additional deities, Deccan, western and eastern Indian traditions adopt another form of Śiva, that of Kālabhairava, along with Kālī. The convention possibly begins innocuously at Ravulaphadi (Aihole), and at Elephanta. Ellora tradition elaborates its meaning and transmits it to Gujarat and possibly also to Orissa (Vaital Deul). To understand the symbolism of Kāla and Kālī along with Mātṛkās it is necessary to recount the symbolism implicit in the Saptamātṛkā configuration.

The most important aspect of Saptamātṛkā symbolism is the implication of the cyclical universal time and its cessation. In a standard version, Śiva opens the group, symbolically embodying the process of creation as the universal father; in one of the forms of *yogī*, dancer, musician or eternal teacher. In the cases of exceptions, as in medieval Rajasthan, Śiva in one of these very forms occupies the central placement, where the beginning of creation and preservation is located at the very locus of the composition. In such cases Gaṇeśa, the remover of obstacles opens the composition. The order of Saptamātṛkā group always begins with Brahmāṇī, the *Śakti* of the creator god Brahmā, symbolising the creation. In the standard versions, Vaiṣṇavī occupies the central position among the Saptamātṛkā group, flanked on sides by three goddesses each. Vaiṣṇavī's presence in the centre indicate the preservation of the universe. The cycle of periodical time ends with dissolution, symbolized by Cāmuṇḍā. As the only Devī Śakti among Mātṛkās, her persona in the emaciated form; the skeleton, suggest the immortality of the only Devī Śakti who exists beyond death and time, her bones symbolizing the only permanent physical reality after death, as per the Tāntric tradition. Whenever at the end of the constellation the ultimate form of Śiva as Kālabhairava is present, with the symbolism of death; death not prior to rebirth, but the final emancipatory liberation from the cycles of birth and death.

Theologically, Kāla is eternal time. Kāla, as early as *Atharvaveda*, is associated with the septapartite progression of time. "Time, the steed, runs with seven reins (rays), thousand eyed, ageless, rich in seed. . . . With seven wheels does Time ride, seven naves has he, immortality in his axle."[92] "Śiva is called 'Mahākāla', 'Great Time', or 'Kāla Rudra', all devouring time. His *śakti* or active energy, appears in this destructive form personified in the terrible goddess Kālī, who is Time, for Kālī is the feminine form of Kāla, which means Time, the black-blue colour, and death".[93] He (Kāla) is equivalent to *tamas*, the dark tendency of disintegration, of which Śiva is the lord. As Kāla he swallows everything with the quality of darkness.[94] Impelled by the supreme joy of creative power, god Kāla is given his mandate, and by his own sport, aeon after aeon, he consumes the whole universe; and having consumed it, Kāla becomes Mahākāla.[95] Kāla the dark mode of Śiva, moves as an antiphony of Śiva's dance; the fire of creation becomes recognizable in the extinction, when Kāla, Time, consumes itself and becomes Mahākāla, absolute Time or Timelessness.[96]

Thus, theologically Saptamātṛkās epitomize the creation, preservation, death and the final liberation of the soul, *mukti*. The Deva *śakti*s stand for *bhukti*, the process of achieving *mukti*, according to the Tāntric tradition.

In representing the realms of *bhukti* as well as *mukti*, Indian artists have excelled in their imagination. Between creation and destruction, is played out the mortal plight to achieve the balance between concerns of fertility, procreation and motherhood on one hand, and preservation, power, coercion and death on the other. Sculpturally these concerns are masquraded in the motifs of the mother and the child, in wielding the *āyudha*s and *vāhana*s, and in contrasting the sensual figuration and the repulsive and terrifying skeletal forms. Within this the sculptors also wedge-in some of the most striking humanistic images of maternal love and affection. The intersubjectivity that manifest in some of such representations, where mothers carry the child on their hips, or hold them by hands, or control the pranks of the toddler, testify the tender and the delicate feelings within the essentialised and grave iconic 'representations'. It is herein that artists appear to have exceeded the limitations in creative imagination.

But further, what other creative opportunities could have been available to the sculptors while creating plastic equivalents of Mātṛkā imagery? Perhaps, the creative possibilities to a large extent, were limited. First we may consider the scope for the sculptor in terms of arrangement and placement. Since they are conceived in terms of a cluster, they were always placed in groups. Since this is established, that even in some early extent slab reliefs, the heptads are carved together in one *paṭa*. In rock-cut monuments, they are placed in rows, either seated, standing or dancing. Presumably a similar arrangement was also used in the case of loose sculptures too. What kind of possibilities could then have existed within such monotonous horizontal grouping?

The options lay between carving the images either seated or standing. The creative ingenuity within this scope could be seen in terms of the variations in the postures. They may be seated in *godohikāsana* as in the earliest depictions of Kuṣāṇa period. Or, they could be placed looking out towards the faithful, seated in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* or *pralaṁbapādāsana* as in Badoh Pathari, Besnagar, etc. Sometimes they would be seated sideways as in Kotesvar, Samalaji (group-D), etc. In each case a certain rhythmic flow of leg positions and body flexions are cleverly orchestrated by parallels or some sudden variations, as in Cave Nos. 22 and 21 at Ellora. Similarly the sculptors saw further possibilities in the hand positions, and in the manner of holding the *āyudha*s. They saw the possibility of options regarding how to place or relate the child to the mothers, either on the lap, or clinging to the legs, when introducing the children in iconographic ensemble along with each Mātṛkā image. Sometimes the position of the head, glances and neck inclinations are given variations, imparting, aristocratic vanity, or gentle maternity to the images, such as in Cave No. 21 at Ellora and Tanesara. Similarly, the placement of *vāhana*s in relation to each goddess also gave the sculptors ample scope for ingeniously devising fresh compositional patterns.

The physical beauty and its acme in some archetypal visualizations is also contrasted with the extreme grotesque types of physiognomy as in Cāmuṇḍā, Kāla and Kālī. The composite image types such as Vārāhī also gave ample scope for innovations. In these the sculptor not only integrate the female body and animal head organically, but also lent it an aristocratic elegance and expressions of maternal love and profundity, seen in examples such as in Vadaval group.

The standing array of Mātṛkās too were endowed with subtle range of variations. The mild *dvibhaṅga*, *tribhaṅga* or *atibhaṅga* were the obvious range of variations. These, however are used to impart grace and elegance to the feminine body which the sculptors seem to have fully mastered and explored. The holding or caressing of the child in the standing positions offered further possibilities of visualizing difficult postures, such as in Tintoi and Vadaval examples.

The iconographic association with Śiva-Naṭarāja possibly may have given rise to the adoption of the dancing stances for Mātṛkā images. Considering the interconnections between the art of dance and the plastic arts, the possibilities that sculptors saw in incorporating dance postures in the standing Mātṛkā groups, to my mind, is an equally compelling explanation. In any case, this provided the sculptors with further possibilities and variations in exploring emphasized grace and rhythm. In such examples, the body flexions, leg positions and positions of the hand are visualized in such a way that a group relationship is established, that is to say that, each posture is not separately visualized.

In a sculptural programme of limited creative potentialities, the Indian sculptor at his best came up with many creative alternatives, though subtle and hardly ever dramatic, which, however was possible only in narrative themes. Apart from recognizing the fact that the Mātṛkā sculptural groups are a very significant segment of the total Indian sculptural output, it may be conceded that most of Indian sculpture may be looked at from the point of view of the aesthetics that developed within specific cultic pre-conditions, which awaits future investigations.

References

1. As distinct from Vedic Brāhmanism, neo-Brāhmanism or the *Smārta*, Epic-Purāṇic Brāhmanism, also called Āgamic religions, is heterogeneous, considering its eclectic and synthetic approach. The epics, *Purāṇa*s, *Dharmaśāstra*s and other neo-Brāhmanical documents, with respect to their intrinsic content are to be differentiated from the earlier Brāhmanic literature, the Vedic *Saṁhitā*s. The intermediary phase of the historical process is marked by the period of *Upaniṣad* and *Āraṇyaka* compositions. The last mentioned tradition, concerned primarily with philosophical and metaphysical speculations, and the *yoga* practices (in place of the Vedic community ritualism), symptomatically represents the rupture that was taking place within the orthodox Vedic sphere, absorbing and developing pre-Vedic traditions, such as those seen evident in the Indus Valley relics. Neo-Brāhmanism is a product of the ongoing acculturisation, from the late Vedic period onwards, the consolidated ideology of which came of age during or a little prior to the Gupta period, although throughout the medieval period it continued to evolve. The primary aspect of this trend is the emergence of sectarian cults centered around a particular deity from among many — such as Viṣṇu, Śiva, Devī, Sūrya, Gaṇapati and other theophanies, within which a number of other major or minor

deities and cults were incorporated on a hierarchical principle.

2. Attention can be drawn to only a very few studies which attempt to historically interpret the specific meaning levels of the icons, while interrelating the areas of socio-political, cultic and iconographical studies. One such attempt is by Frederick M. Asher, ("Historical and Political Allegory in Gupta Art", in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. by Bardwell L. Smith, Delhi, 1983, pp. 18-53.) The essay analyses the political meanings of two *Vaiṣṇava* iconographic forms of Gupta period, namely that of Varāha and Trivikrama, so as to bring out the underlying political intentions of Gupta kings. Some of the research publications of Champakalakshmi, Suvira Jaiswal and Rajan Gurukal have been significant attempts in this direction. However, their contributions are primarily in the area of analyzing the socio-political factors in the formation of cults and religious movements such as the tradition of *Bhakti*, and do not directly deal with the iconographic forms as such.
3. The early differentiation between gods and demons, and the absence of theodicy within the Vedic panthèon is reflective of a specific social condition. According to R.S. Sharma the pastoral Ṛgvedic society, despite having in it differentiation of ranks, and utilizing slave labour did not develop into a class society, since the absence of a surplus could not provide a base for a social class of exploiters.(R.S. Sharma, "Conflict, Distribution and Differentiation in Ṛgvedic society", in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress,* 38th session,Bhubaneswar, 1997, pp. 177-91). Further in the later Vedic society although the four *varṇa*s had emerged and the privileged upper castes lived of the exploitation of the peasantry and servile labour, a totally exploitative system had not evolved. It was only around 500 BC in eastern U.P. and Bihar, with the advancement of agricultural technology that a larger surplus was produced which became the material foundation for the advent and stabilisation of class society and its instrument, the State.
4. Sukumari Bhattacharya, *The Indian Theogony*, Calcutta, 1978, p. 351.
5. The social factors that led to the formation of such a composite religious philosophy by the brāhmaṇa theologians is embedded in a notion of the Kālī age which is elaborately described in different early and later *Purāṇa* literature and in the inscriptions. In the situation of a series of foreign political powers, increasing socio-political and economic power of the lower strata of the society and their resistance to taxation etc., and the resulting threat to Brāhmanical social order leading to insecurity and confusions, the Purāṇic description of Kali age exemplifies the brāhmaṇa anxiety in re-establishing the authority and power, and totalising the social order for their class benefit. For instance, unlike the *varṇāśramadharma* in the Vedic tradition, in the Āgamic tradition these are "made dependent on God and subservient to His grace" (V.S. Pathak, *Smārta Religious Traditions*, Meerut, 1987, p. 15) so as to make the coercion more effective.
6. In the initial phase of the state formation upon the ruins of earlier tribal identities, during the middle of first millennium BC, the economic condition was based upon the more organized agriculture and the growth of trade. Buddhism which subsumed the metaphysical angst of the earlier centuries brought in the revolutionary alternative of non-violence and renunciation, which also most significantly provided a human, and individual centredness in the matters of worldly and spiritual quests within the civilizational discourses of the times. Such developments in the religious sphere in ancient India can be seen evolving as a result of, and as a response to, the growth of urban civilization of the Gangetic valley, designated as the 'second urbanization', the first being the proto-historic phase of Indus Valley civilization. (Romila Thapar, "Ethics,

Religion and Social Protest in the First Millennium BC in North India", in *Ancient Indian Social History*, 1978, pp. 40-41). Technological developments that characterize the second phase, are the widespread use of iron, domestication of horses and the extension of plough agriculture giving rise to a sophisticated market economy. The other significant developments were the merging of territorial entities like the *janapada*, such as Gāndhāra, Kuru, Pāñcāla, Matsya, Kāśī, etc., the dominance of *kṣatriya* oligarchies, the shift from cattle wealth of the earlier period to wealth counted on possession of land, money-lending and wage labour, hired labour and slavery. The endogamous kinship groups, ranked on the basis of occupation and service relationships reflect increase in social stratification, where *varṇa* and *jāti* become a measure for socio-economic and ritual status. (*See* Suvira Jaiswal, "Studies in Early Indian Social History: Trends and Possibilities", in *Survey of Research in Economic and Social History of India*, ed. by R.S. Sharma, Delhi, 1986, for a review of researches on *jāti* and *varṇa*) The growth of towns depended upon the intensification of agriculture, which were the capitals of the *janapada*. The development of trade enabled the growth of vaiśya class, with the *śreṣṭhī* (the merchant and the banker) becoming a powerful agent in the society. Hence, the ascendancy of Buddhism in the early centuries of its development availed the advantages of the changed socio-economic conditions for its growth.

7. During the imperial rule of Aśoka, the Buddhist institutions and related art production received most enduring royal patronage. This is an exceptional instance in the ancient history, since following this period till around fifth century AD, it was largely the communities of traders, artisans, guilds of craftsmen, small-scale landowners, monks and nuns who were the patrons of Buddhist institutions and art. The involvement of Śuṅga and Sātavāhana rulers in such enterprises were marginal. (For further details, *see* Romila Thapar, *Cultural Transaction and Early India : Tradition and Patronage*, Delhi, 1994, pp. 28-32.) The Brāhmanical stigma against the ritual purity of vaiśya class, combined with the absence of organized Brāhmanical sects comparable to the Buddhist *saṁgha*, acted as a set back to the possibility of organized community donations for cultural productions. The community patronage from the middle class of the society gradually began to decline with the beginning of feudalistic socio-economic developments during the mid-first millennium AD, which then came to be replaced and superseded by royal and aristocratic patronage. (Romila Thapar, *ibid.* pp. 31-32.) From then onwards Brāhmanic institutions and art production received unprecedented imperial patronage and ideological validation.

8. Different heterodox sects competed with each other for patronage from the *śreṣṭhī*. Romila Thapar points out that in the Brāhmanical literature of the times the vaiśya had not been included among the superior social group and bore irksomeness towards them, since power in Brāhmanical terms was connected with the ownership of land. (Romila Thapar, *op.cit,* 1978, p. 44.) This is significant, since the stultification of Brāhmanism during this period could be positively read as a result of certain stigma in availing patronage from the economic and social power centers. Further, the *karmakāra* (artisan), the *dāsabhṛtaka* and cultivators were all included in śūdra *varṇa* and the fifth and the lowest strata of untouchables were considered ritually polluting, and hence the class exclusiveness of brāhmaṇa made it impossible for an acculturisation. (Paradoxically, the autochthonous goddess such as Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā were accultured into the post-Vedic polytheistic sphere as 'non-deities', the social position of 'people' from whom these ideas were incorporated, such as Cāṇḍāla and Ḍoms (the scavengers and those who maintained cremation grounds) and from those who belonged to the primitive tribes

such as Niṣāda and Bhilla remained alien to the high Brāhmanical religion. A greater Brāhmanical social cohesion, however was inevitable and achieved at the origin of feudalism in the Gupta period, during or a bit earlier.

Above the kinship integration of *varṇa*s and *jāti*s arose the overarching monarchic power during fourth century BC. Magadha was the most powerful among the *janapada*, leading to the formation of Mauryan empire, which soon gave rise to the paramount authoritarian political power of Aśoka. Buddhism received the imperial patronage and functioned as a powerful agent in social cohesion and political power. Based on agrarian economy and the unprecedented growth of internal and foreign trade, the subsequent five centuries saw the rise of a series of small kingdoms ruling in various regions. (Romila Thapar, "Social Mobility in Ancient India With Special Reference to Elite Groups", in *Ancient Indian Social History*, Orient Longman, 1978, p. 123).

9. Asceticism developed as a counter culture subverting the dominant Vedic/Brāhmanic discourse which was based on ritualism and the *varṇa* structuration. This shift in emphasis via the metaphysical and the Yoga trajectory (with the rise of heterodox sects towards the middle of first millennium BC) was a sharp edged ideological discourse against the Vedic orthodoxy. This 'corrective' mode within the mainstream operated through assimilation and acculturation of the subaltern elements, aided by the rise of a market economy and the resulting shift in the power concentration.

10. The new orientation illustrates at the outset a reservation towards the authority of the *Veda*. While giving primacy to the new system, the older system as such was not discredited totally and is quoted as and when necessary for validations, for instance while rationalizing the *varṇāśramadharma*. In this sense, the neo-Brāhmanism, particularly of the *Smārta* type treat the older tradition of the *Veda* as authoritative, but nevertheless propose new *mantra* recitations and *vidhi* formulas, and claim values and efficiency as against those of the *Veda*. (P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, vol. II, pp. 915, 927, 934).

    The original non-Vedic or even anti-Vedic theological trend of Pañcarātra, Bhāgavata, Pāśupata and Kāpālika sects and the philosophical traditions of *Lokāyata,* Sāṁkhya, and *Tantra* with the trend disposed variously to atheism, anti-brāhmaṇa attitude, anti-*varṇāśramadharma* regulations, favourable attitude to foreigners, śūdra and women, can be seen being resolved and mediated within the *Smārta* Epic-Purāṇic religion which recognized the authority of Veda and adhered to *varṇāśramadharma* and *Smṛti* rules. To quote S.R. Goyal, ". . . the composite character of the Paurāṇika religion was due to the attempt made by the *Smārta brāhmaṇa*s to preach and popularize their respective faiths against the heresies, and to establish the Brāhmanical rules of castes and duties and the authority of the Vedas among the followers of at least their respective sects." (S.R. Goyal, *A Religious History of Ancient India*, Vol. II, Meerut, 1986, p. 9).

11. Scholars such as J.N. Banerjea (*The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi, 1974, pp. 491-92.) D.P. Chattopadhaya (*Lokāyata*, New Delhi, 1959, Chapter on Gauri : Studies in Indian Mother Right). David Kinsley (*Hindu Goddesses*, Delhi, 1987, p. 96, p. 117) point out the assimilation of goddess epiphanies such as Aṁbikā,Umā, Durgā, Kālī, Kātyāyanī, etc. as originating and being adopted into Brāhmanical mainstream from the non-Āryan autochthonous sources.

12. Moti Chandra in his exhaustive study of Śrī-Lakṣmī in ancient India maintains that Śrī who indicates only abstract virtues in the *Veda*s assumes the role of full-fledged goddess in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as a result of the assimilation from the non-Āryan sources. The

Mahābhārata evidence (*Mbh,* XII.124.54-60) of the dialogue between Śrī and the *asura* king Prahrāda, which establishes that Śrī in the beginning belonged to the *asura*s and later deserted them for the *deva*s at the request of Indra, further strengthens the point. Most significantly Prahrāda addresses her as the goddess of the people (*lokasya parameśvarī*). (***See*** Moti Chandra, "Studies in the Cult of Mother Goddess in Ancient India", in *Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India*, No. 12, 1973. pp. 1-47.

13. The socio-historical and political implication of the ascension of the Brāhmanical sectarian theology with a primary import upon conflict, militancy and power assertion had to remain in gestation for a considerably long period, evident due to the scanty instances of 'temples' and images during a few centuries before and after Kuṣāṇa period until the Gupta regime. The militant theological development can be seen dovetailing with the notion of divine origin of the power of kingship and the authority of Brāhmanical *dharma* and the conflation of the two resulting in a highly centralized power nexus comprising of *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya* classes. The gradual and steady rise of neo-Brāhmanical religious sphere being supported by, and at least partially arising out of this power nexus culminated during the imperial rule of the Guptas; and from then on, history, till the establishment of the central Muslim power remained within this mode. Economically, the post-Gupta times, designated as the period of Hindu dynasties, is marked by the change in the agrarian system with the assignment of land-grants and revenue-grants to both religious and secular assignees within the feudal politico-economic structure in many parts of the sub-continent. Since caste-wise stratification is one of the most obvious features of 'Hindu' society, in order to understand the implication of the brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya power nexus in relation to the formation and continuation of neo-Brāhmanical ideology and the theophanies, a probe into the historical process of the evolution of *varṇa / jāti* system is necessary. (***See*** Suvira Jaiswal, *op.cit.,* 1986). To quote, " The basic identity of the concepts of *varṇa* and *jāti* in the perception of participant people indicates that *varṇa* and *jāti* did not constitute two different systems but one, and it is well-known that the Hindus themselves even today apply the term *jāti* to all the levels of the caste system beginning from *varṇa* to what is described by sociologist as "subcaste" (*ibid.* p. 47.)

The pioneering work of D.D. Kosambi in studying the *varṇa / jāti* within the perspective of the evolution of the materialist history proposed that the system as a new social organization grew in the Gangetic basin after the assimilation of Āryan and pre-Āryan into one civil society. (D.D. Kosambi, "On the Origin of the Brāhmin Gotras", in *JBBRAS*, vol. XXVI, 1950, p. 50.) Tracing the origin he maintained that the formation of servile caste from the defeated *dāsa*s and śūdra tribes led to the development of new relations of production in Āryan society. (D.D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, London, 1965, p. 51.) Further, the effect of this is described as introducing economic differentiation in the egalitarian society leading to economic disparity and the rise of private property of certain sub-groups or family groups eventually leading to the origin of caste/class system. (D.D.Kosambi, *Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, p. 93. and *The culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, London, p. 86). In the class society, despite the fact that the tribal influences continued, "the priests and warrior castes united to repress and exploit the Āryan peasant (vaiśya*)* and non-Āryan helot (śūdra)." (D.D. Kosambi, *Introduction to the of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, p. 104.)

B.N.S. Yadav's researches (a) B.N.S. Yadav, *Society and Culture in Northern India in the Twelfth Century*, Allahabad, 1973. (b) "Immobility and subjection of Indian Peasantry in Early Medieval Complex", in *The Indian Historical Review*, I, No. I, March, 1974, pp. 18-27. (c) "Problems of the Interaction between Socio Economic Classes in the Early Medieval Complex", in *IHR* III, no. 1. July, 1976) have corroborated and furthened the knowledge of changes in the social order in the context of technological and economic changes (the forces of production), (B.N.S. Yadav, "Some Aspects of the Changing Order in India During the Saka-Kusana Age", in *Kuṣāṇa Studies*, ed. by G.R. Sharma, Allahabad, 1968, pp. 75-97) enabling the growth of individual enterprises in the field of agriculture during early Kuṣāṇa rule, which obviated the need for centralized state control. Economic changes combined with the entry of a large number of Śaka and Kuṣāṇa foreign hordes, the activities of 'heretical' sects such as Buddhist and Jains created a crisis in the established order and led to the loosening of the stricter subjection of the śūdras. Their transformation as sharecroppers and as a class of dependent peasantry on the one hand and the decline in the status of the free peasantry represented by the vaiśyas on the other. Such feudal tendencies, leading to the division of the soil among multitude of sub-feudatories and increasing exploitation of the peasantry became more pronounced in the later centuries and reached its climax in the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD over a major part of the subcontinent. (Freely paraphrased from Suvira Jaiswal, *op.cit.* 1986, p. 54.)

The writings of D.D. Kosambi and R.S. Sharma have brought out the role of the brāhmaṇa caste in the expansion of agricultural settlements and the Brāhmanical acculturisation of backward tribes in producing the so-called larger Hindu society and enabling the spread and assertion of brāhmaṇa caste ideology. The beginning of the expansion of neo-Brāhmanism coincides with the post-Mauryan times with the weakening of centralized state control and the increase in the trade and commerce which resulted in the considerable affluence of śūdra labourers and artisans. R.S. Sharma links the descriptions of Kali age in the early *Purāṇa* literature to the socio-economic crisis that came about, due to increasing difficulty in collecting taxes from this affluent class. He defines Kali age according to religious sources thus, "Whenever there is a deviation from the established order of things, it is represented as the advent of the Kālī or of some traits of that age. Kali means the neglect of rituals, and predominance and influence of hieratical sects and also of foreign rulers. It also means the non-performance of the functions assigned to different social strata or *varṇa*s by the Dharmasastras." (The Kali Age: A Period of Social Crisis, *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, ed. by D.N. Jha, Delhi, 1987, pp. 46-47.) Because of this the religious and probably administrative services of the brāhmaṇa caste began to be remunerated through land grants, which had great consequences in the formation of Hindu society, leading to Brāhmanisation of peripheral communities and the resulting acculturisation of Brāhmanical religious rituals and the enlargement of theophanies. The spread of iron-plough agriculture into tribal areas thus led the way towards the conversion of the backward aboriginal tribes into upgradation as śūdra caste. "Therefore, Brāhmanical texts of the Gupta and post-Gupta times assigned agriculture as the *varṇa* duty of the śūdras and Brāhmanism assimilated the religious practices of these new entrants and made them respectable. This development coupled with the improved material condition of śūdras resulted in a more liberal attitude towards the sudras in religious matters and conferment of new religious rites on them." (Suvira Jaiswal, *op.cit.*, 1986, p. 69.) Further, the phenomenon is viewed as an ongoing process, starting with the early centuries of Christian era and continuing through the post-Gupta period till its culmination in the late medieval period. (R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras*, 2nd edn., p. 305 f.)

A.N. Bose points out that "the brāhmanical social philosophy provided only a veneer of external harmony' but class interests based on the production and distribution of wealth remained 'essentially hostile'" (A.N.Bose, *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, 2 vols., first published in 1942-46; 2nd edn., Calcutta, 1961-67, ii, pp. 254-55. As quoted by Suvira Jaiswal, *op.cit*, 1986, p. 54.) In the feudal economic and social relations between the classes, the degradation of the communities involved in manual operations of agriculture and crafts was inevitable, on the other hand the dominant classes maintained contempt towards manual labour and exploited the classes engaged in it. The neo-Brāhmanical theory of the pure and impure according to *varṇāśramadharma* provided a strong ideological instrument for keeping the dispossessed in their downtrodden state.

14. Studies of the history of gender relation and particularly the evolutionary social positions of women in ancient and medieval India is absolutely inadequate. Only two books, that too with certain reservations can be mentioned (A.S. Altekar, *Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Delhi, 1962, 1st edn. 1938, and L.K. Tripathi (ed.) *Position and Status of Women in Ancient India*, 2 Vols., Varanasi, 1988.) The recent publication (*Women Writing in India : 600 B.C. to Early 20th Century,* ed. by Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, Bombay, 1991) has a useful introduction, but actually do not deal with the area of 'representation' of women in the religious and secular literature or of that of law books.
15. V.S. Pathak elaborates upon the movement by identifying three tendencies, namely (a) systematization and re-definition of *varṇa* and *āśrama,* (b) integration of the Āgamic values in the margin around the core of the Vedic culture, and (c) assimilation of the elements of non-Vedic rituals after decking them out in the Vedic apparel. V.S. Pathak, *op.cit.,* 1987, p. 22.
16. *See*, *ibid.,* pp. 22-36.
17. ***See for details***, Sukumari Bhattacharji, *op.cit.,* 1978, p. 352.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.,* p. 356.
20. Emily Kearns, "Indian Myth", in *The Feminist Companion to Mythology,* ed. by Carolyne Larrington, London, 1992, p. 193.
21. Odile Divakaran, "Durga the Great Goddess: Meanings and Forms in the Early Period", in *Discourses on Śiva*, ed. by Michael W. Meister, Bombay, 1984, p. 272.
22. *Mahābhārata*, 4.5.
23. *Ibid.*, 6.23.
24. *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa,* 2.107.5-14.
25. *Ibid.*, 2.120.35.
26. The coercive authority of the gods and goddesses have its parallel in the mortal kings. What I can best attempt here is very brief references to politico-social historical context which I think are germane to art historical interpretations. Considering the complexities involved in analyzing the evolution, formation and interrelations of the neo-Brāhmanical power nexus between theologians and kṣatriya caste, the development of power classes and changes in the ideas of kingship — the Brāhmanical notions of divine kingship and brāhmaṇa authority in the matters of *dharma* and the formation of the mythico-political social control could be discussed.

    The kṣatriya kings who shared the neo-Brāhmanical anxiety of power assertion at the beginning of the so-called degeneration of *dharma* greatly aided the growth of the new religious consciousness. The large number of inscriptions which record the dissatisfaction and distress about *Kaliyuga* lament over "the extirpation of the traditional organizations of *varṇa* (class-caste) and *āśrama*, decrease in the popularity of Vedic rituals and lastly the transgression of the right course of conduct". (V.S. Pathak, *op.cit.*, 1987, p. 1.) For further details of literary and inscriptional data regarding *Kaliyuga* ***see*** V.S. Pathak, *ibid.,* pp. 1-8, and R.S. Sharma, *op.cit.*, 1987, pp. 45-111.

V.S. Pathak after pointing out the several instances of various kings being praised for their attempts in restoring the traditional values, however notes that this could not be accomplished which led to the resolve in fatalism and other-worldly disposition, developed immediately after the Gupta age. (V.S. Pathak, *ibid.*, p. 2.) Rather than reading the points of crisis leading to a weak reaction, such as the above, from the brāhmaṇa priests, the Kali descriptions can be exemplified as implying "a state of class tension and confusion caused by clash of interests between the organizing and managerial functions of the upper two strata and producing functions of the lower two strata." (R.S. Sharma, *op.cit.,* 1987, p. 49).

The patronage and appropriation of the dominant religious power group for political ends at a given point in history is a continuous tradition in India, from the earliest imperial dynasty onwards, continued throughout the medieval period. Parallel to this, Epics, *Purāṇa* and *Dharmaśāstra* sources idealize the role kings as protectors of *dharma*, which is attributed commonly to earthly kings and to the gods. Based upon the concept of *avatāravāda* both found rationalisation and validation through myth. All these functioned within the framework of the concept of *dharma*, which is one of the most enduring concepts of the Indian polity. In the narrow sense *dharma* denote religion and in its wider connotation implies religion as an organized social system and the very basis of the state. A.K. Narain, quoting a passage from *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (I.4.14.) argues that *dharma*, identified with 'Truth' was created to strengthen the god Brahmā in the maintenance of Vedic Brāhmanical social order. The king is sought to maintain the stability of society in favour of the Vedic Brāhmanical system. (***See*** A.K. Narain, "Religious Policy and Toleration in Ancient India", in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. by Bardwell L. Smith, Delhi, 1983, p. 20.) Kauṭilya, for instance, demands a king to revive a situation of a disrupted Brahmanical system, and be a *dharmapravartaka*. (*Arthaśāstra*, 3.1.38 ed. by R.P. Kangle, Bombay, Part I, Text, 1969; Part II, English Translation, 1972; Part III, A Study, 1965). Though there is no section on religion and the State, the *Arthaśāstra* in various contexts is unequivocal in holding that the State should support the cause of the Brāhmanical religion and society, which the later standard Brāhmanical works on polity and society maintained with or without modification. (***See***, A.K. Narain, *op.cit.*, 1987 pp. 21 and 24.) The criterion of political stability and prevalence of ideal *dharma* (or the relative or total absence of these) is the logical foundation upon which the cyclical changes of *yuga* — the Kṛta, the Tretā, the Dvāpara and the Kali are dependent. It is stated that the king is the cause of his age. (*Śānti Parvan*, 70.9; and *Udyoga Parvan*, 130.14., as quoted by R.S. Sharma, *op.cit.,* 1987, p. 47. fn. 17.) As per the *varṇa* duties, *Dharmasūtra* sources assign religious and intellectual functions to the brāhmaṇa and the ruling/fighting functions to the kṣatriya. The vaiśya and śūdra are assigned the duties of production and service respectively. The assertion of *varṇāśramadharma* combined with the *karma* theory produced the neo-Brāhmanical notion of the maintenance of societal functioning and polity. Different kinds of *daṇḍa* or coercion as recommended for the different *varṇa* to enforce the rule of law. (*Śānti Parvan*, 15.9. as quoted by R.S. Sharma, *op.cit.*, p. 49.) R.S. Sharma points out that the object of *daṇḍa* was to make the vaiśya pay taxes to the king and offer sacrificial fees to the priests. (45 R.S.Sharma, *op.cit.*, p. 49.) Quoting *Ādi Purāṇa*, (*Ādi Purāṇa*, 188.69.) R.S. Sharma asserts the intense hostility between brāhmaṇa and śūdra, reflected in the description of the *varṇa* confusion in the Kali age. The hostility can be seen coupled with the anxiety regarding disobedience and transgression of *varṇa* regulations and the resulting subversion, including that from the upper classes. The anxiety is also expressed regarding the laxity of kings in their responsibility towards law and order, and over taxation or the over enjoyment of the taxes. *Śānti Parvan* states that the institution of *daṇḍa* protects *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. (*Śānti Parvan*, 15.3.) "The king is called *daṇḍa*, he is called the imperishable *dharma*, lord of the *varṇa*s and *āśramas*. (*Dharmasūtra* inserts this after *Śānti Parvan*, 14.14., as quoted by R.S. Sharma, *op.cit.* 1987, p. 56.)

The traditional Indian notion of kingship acknowledges the monarch's divine rank. (Jan Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View*, Leiden, 1966, pp. 24-33.) This is attested by the evidence of Kaniṣka being described as *devaputra*, son of god, which ascertained the divinity of the king. (John Rosenfield, *Dynastic Art of the Kushans*, Berkeley, 1967, pp. 149-51, 202-06.) Frederick Asher notes that, "This notion must have been especially important for these alien rulers who did not have the authority of kṣatriya birth to justify their monarchy." (Frederick M. Asher, "Historical and Political Allegory in Gupta Art", in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. by Bardwell L. Smith, Delhi, 1983, pp. 54-55.) Though, during the long period between the very early formation of state power and the Kuṣāṇa period the changed relation between the idea of kingship and Brāhmanism had been established, it is logical to infer that the Kuṣāṇa king was adopting a traditional Indian means of justifying the divine status of the kingship. However, it needs to be conceded that the divine origin ascertained by Kaniṣka is of generic in nature, strategically(?) without declaring the sectarian affiliation. It is significant that important Gupta kings and other rulers of various later 'Hindu' dynasties styled themselves as the prime devotees of their respective neo-Brāhmanical *iṣṭadevatā*, and their 'being' linked to gods in their kingly functions.

Consolidation of neo-Brāhmanical revival coincides with the rise of imperial Gupta rule, extending from *ca.* AD 300 to 600. This was possible due to the long drawn neo-Brāhmanisation that was taking place under the policies of brāhmaṇa kings namely Śuṅga *(ca.* 187-75 BC) and Kaṇva (*ca.* 75-30 BC) in the north,the Sātavāhana (*ca.* 30 BC-AD 225) and the Vākāṭaka *ca.* AD 255-550) in the Deccan, and the Kadamba (*ca.* AD 345-565) in the south. It may also be noted that there was the continuous presence of small indigenous/tribal republics, before and after Kuṣāṇa rule, like the Kuninda, the Auḍumbara, the Yaudheya, the Nāga, the Mitra, etc., which were assimilated into neo-Brāhmanism, (as evidenced by their coins), and illustrate the presence of a situation in which the neo-Brāhmanical imperial power could assert itself.

Discussing the religious practices in relation to Gupta political power assertion, A.K. Narain points out three levels of its function. Firstly, the use of Vedic rituals and symbolism for the legitimation of authority, which aided to establish divinity of the particular king's imperial intentions. Secondly, for their personal goals, they subscribed to one or the other of the popular faiths, mostly of Brāhmanic origin. Thirdly, in their public role, they assumed a liberal disposition, allowing freedom as well as, at times, promotion of religious beliefs and practices other than their own.(A.K. Narain, *op.cit.*, 1987, p. 34.) Numerous numismatic, inscriptional and sculptural evidences belonging to the kings; Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta II (376-414), Kumāra Gupta I (415- 455), Skanda Gupta (AD 455-467), Kumāra Gupta II (AD 474-476), Budha Gupta (AD 477-500), Narasiṁha Gupta (AD 500 - ?) and Vinaya Gupta (*ca.* AD 507) prove the above contentions. (For details ***see***, *ibid.,* pp. 35-44.) The survey of data regarding Vākāṭaka, Kadamba, Salankayana, Bhoja, early Cālukya, Mathura, and early Pallava dynasties, compares favourably with that of the Guptas in their pattern of religious behaviour. (For details ***see***, *ibid.,* pp. 44-48.).

The religious policy of pluralism and toleration of Gupta and other contemporary or later dynasties, however, cannot be taken for granted. (The opinion of A.K. Narain, for instance is in favour of interpreting the data for this purpose, ***see*** *ibid.*, pp. 48-51.) Even if we do not follow the Western model of ecclesiastical and state power relationship in the matters of political power assertion, the issues of the intermingled state and religious power nexus needs to be addressed from a defined paradigm. The brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya *varṇa* categories during the neo-Brāhmanical period, had transgressed the original purity; either in terms of occupational specificity or in terms of authenticity of origin, due to foreign incursions or due to the *varṇa* mix-up. Evidences prove that the brāhmaṇa much before fifth century AD had been assuming positions such as kings, army generals, ministers, poets, farmers and even merchants. Despite the dichotomy that existed between these two *varṇa*s, they formed the ruling class, intermingling their class interests, and in making the stratified social order work for their benefit. The Brāhmanical political theorist can be seen to have postulated a totalizing, subsumptive system, under which a number of autonomous systems could function without disturbing the overall supremacy. This subsumption through incorporation allowed the differences, that of say the Buddhists and Jains, to diffuse and helped in the legitimation of the power nexus of brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya. There are thus no obvious conflicts that is manifested between them and the other power centres as far as the authority of the king and the brāhmaṇa was accepted. The conflicts obliterated, the king could assert his power on the social order as postulated by the brāhmaṇa priests. However, by adopting the Brāhmanical religious practices publicly, the king asserted the brāhmaṇa authority over the people in general and heterodox sects in particular and indirectly controlled and suppressed the non-Brāhmanical. Through the policy of subsumption the equilibrium was maintained. (In this sense it cannot be agreed with A.K. Narain that kingship was a matter of secular sphere and politics as separate from theology, and the idea that *dharma* transcended religion, A.K. Narain, *ibid.,* p. 51.)

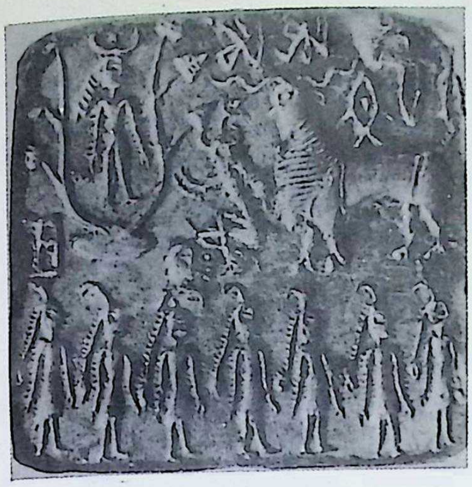
27. V.S. Pathak suggests the evidence of the prevalence of *pañcadevopāsanā* in the Śivaliṅga representing the other four deities on the sides and in the similar compositions noticed in the miniature shrines and structural temples in the early and late medieval period. (V.S. Pathak, *op.cit.,* 1987, p. 63.)
28. Emily Kearns, *op.cit.*, 1992.
29. There is a concern among scholars as to whether or not the epiphanies denote a cohesion.
30. Confused, Oedipal conflict and resolution in the motherhood of Pārvatī to Skanda and Gaṇeśa.
31. *Devī-Māhātmya*, 3.9 to 33.
32. During the early Vedic period socially the 'other', was being referred to variously as *dāsa*, *dasyus*, *rākṣasa* and *asura*. The recent research of W.E. Hale offers an in-depth analytical study of the term *asura*, delineating the evolutionary changes that occurred in its usage. (Wash Edward Hale, *Asura in Early Vedic Religion*, Delhi, 1986.) Pointing

out that the change occur "in the usage of the word and in the nature of a group of being to which that word applies", Hale asserts that *asura* in the early Vedic literature is not used in a godly sense but meant "something like 'lord' ". (*ibid.*, pp. 179-80.) Significantly the word was not restricted to the friendly leaders and gods but also to the enemy leader. In the further stage of development the *asura* (in plural) came to refer to evil beings. The phrase *asura adevaḥ* (*Ṛgveda,* 8.96.9.) means 'lord' of those who were not *deva*s, which "indicate that these *asura*s were non-Āryan human enemy who did not worship Āryan gods." (W. E. Hale, *op. cit.,* p. 180.) In *Atharvaveda* and *Brāhmaṇas*, *asura*s are enemies of Indra, "who could easily be indigenous enemy lords", (*ibid.,* p. 181) which is also supported by the usages of *dāsa* and *rākṣasa*. The significant development in the late part of the *Saṁhitā*s, as pointed out by W.E. Hale, where the anti-god *asura*s, the original human enemies of the Āryan people, become "mythologized into a class of being who opposed the class of beings called gods . . . by the time of *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, *asura*s and *rāksaṣa*s are practically identical." (*ibid.,* p. 181). According to D.P. Chattopadhyaya (*op.cit.,* 1981, Chapter. I, Asura-View, p. 40) the Brāhmanical sources persistently ascribe the *Lokāyata* views to the peoples described as demons and monsters — the *rākṣasa*s, *daitya*s and *asura*s. E.W. Hopkins (*Epic Mythology*, Delhi, 1968, pp. 46-47.) opines that to the epic poets the *asura*s are in general the *a-sura*s, the "ungodly" ones. There are ample evidences to believe that the enemies of gods, such as *asura*s are actually the allegorized class enemies of the *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya* class.

33. ***See*** M.G.S. Narayanan and Veluthat Kesavan, "Bhakti Movement in South India", in *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, ed. by D.N. Jha, Delhi, 1987.
34. Eduardo Matos Moctezuma gives a comparable analysis with regard to Prehispanic Mexico, *see* his *The Mask of Death in Prehispanic Mexico*, Mexico, 1988, pp. 11-12.
35. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *Lokayata,* 1981, New Delhi.
36. For a historical analysis of Śrī-Lakṣmī, *see* Suvira Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism*, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 92-115.
37. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.,* 1981.
38. *Ibid.,* p. xvii.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.,* p. xx.
41. *Ibid.,* p. xxi.
42. *Ibid.,* p. xxii.
43. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *Indian Philosophy*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 109.
44. The epithet as noticed in the commentaries on *Brahma Sūtra* by Śaṅkara (ii.2.7) and in *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* (20), as referred by D.P. Chattopadyaya, *op.cit.,* 1981, p. 383.
45. S.N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1922-55, vol. I, pp. 214-15, as referred by D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *ibid.,* p. 399.
46. *Ibid.,* 422.
47. M.C. Joshi, "Sakta-Tantrism in the Gupta Age", in *Aruṇa Bhāratī*, *A.N. Jani Felicitation Volume, Essays in Contemporary Indological Research*, ed. by Dr. B. Datta, Dr. U.C. Sharma, Dr. Nitin J. Vyas, Baroda, 1983.
48. J.N. Banerjea, "Some Early Literary and Archaeological Data About Tāntrism", in *Essays in Indian Art, Religion and Society*, Indian History Congress Golden Jubilee year publication series, Vol. I, ed. by Krishna Mohan Shrimali, Delhi, p. 49.

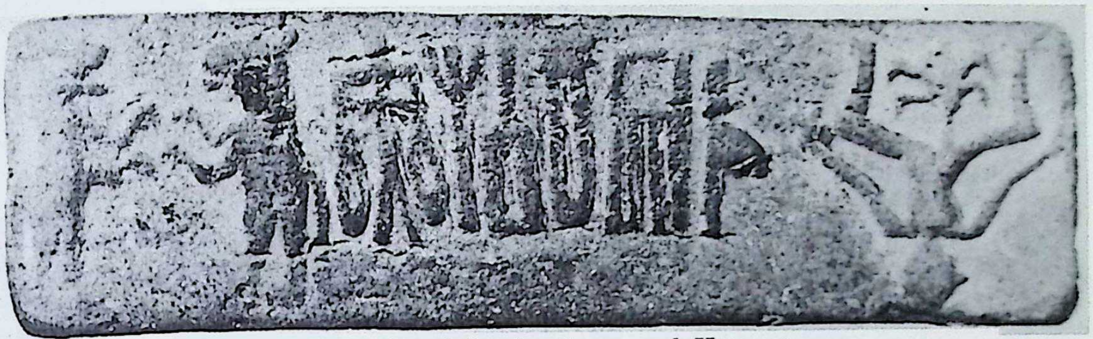
49. *Ibid*., pp. 50-53. ***See also*** J.N. Banerjea, *Purāṇic and Tāntric Religion*, Calcutta, 1966.
50. R.S. Sharma, *op.cit.*, 1987, pp. 376-90. ***See*** for the detailed data of remarkable development of land grants to priests and temples in the early medieval period, pp. 378-80.
51. *Ibid.,* p. 386.
52. Michael W.Meister, *op.cit.*, *ABA*, Vol. XLVII. and Katherine A. Harper, *op.cit.*, 1989.
53. ***See*** W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology : Image, Text, Ideology,* Chicago, 1987, p. 1.
54. For the details of Purāṇic textual sources, ***see*** Chapter 3.
55. ***See*** footnote no. 32.
56. The *Purāṇa* narrative accounts are to be treated distinctly from the *Śilpa-śāstra* accounts which provide iconographic formulas to the artist-craftsman. The *Devī-Māhātmya* description of Mātṛkās, however, reads like a close parallel to the latter. Though a collection of such data is presented in Chapter 3, hardly these are of any value for iconological analysis. Further, on a general survey these materials is mostly found not tallying with the details of images, an in-depth study of such manuscripts, including *Āgama*s and *Tantra*s in the case of pacific iconic forms such as that of Saptamātṛkās, can possibly throw light on the regional bearing, distribution and iconological interpretations. The last mentioned texts may also be explored in order to go into greater details of ritual mode in Mātṛkā worship.
57. W.J.T. Mitchell, *op.cit.*, p. 3.
58. R.C. Agrawala, "The Goddess Mahiṣāsuramardinī in Early Indian Art", in *ABA,* Vol. XXI, No. 2. 1958, p. 127.
59. The ideational realm of the Vedic heptads are related to the seven heavenly rivers, *Sapta-Sindhu*s who give birth to Agni, Soma and all mankind and embody the abstract idea related to the cyclical rhythms in nature and its constant renewal. The seven Mothers symbolized the universe and the septapartite order. (For details refer Chapter 1).
60. D.D. Kosambi, "At the Crossroads : A Study of Mother Goddess Cult Sites", in *Myth and Reality, Studies on the Formation of Indian Culture,* Bombay, 1962, p. 85.
61. For detailed discussion, ***see*** Chapter 2.
62. *Kūrma Purāṇa*, Ch. 16, narrates the story of Mātṛkās assisting Śiva in the battle with Andhakāsura, and once the battle over Mātṛkās had to be appeased for which Bhairava summons Narasiṁha for withdrawing the destructive power of the Mātṛkās, which is performed by the latter. (Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, New York, 1968, p. 382). Similar myth also occur in *Matsya Purāṇa*. (*Matsya Purāṇa*, Allahabad, 1916-17).
63. ***See***, Chapter 1 for details.
64. M.C. Joshi, "Śākta-Tāntrism in the Gupta Age", in *Aruṇa Bhāratī, Prof. A.N. Jani Felicitation Volume*, 1983, Baroda, p. 78.
65. *Devi-Māhātmya,* 1, 50-58.
66. V.S. Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art,* Varanasi, 1965, p. 190, recognizes the connection between the Saptamātṛkās of art and the seven *cakras*.
67. Sir John Woodroffe, *Principles of Tantra,* Part I, Madras, 1969, p. 185.
68. *Devī-Māhātmya,* 1, 82, as quoted by Sir John Woodroffe, *ibid*., p. 185.
69. M.P. Pandit, *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga,* Madras, 1972, p. 53.

70. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.,* 1981, p. 281.
71. *Devī-Māhātmya,* 10, 5.6.
72. V.S. Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art,* Varanasi, 1965, p. 190. Agrawala is the first scholar to recognize the connection between Saptamātṛkās and the seven *chakra*s, however, he did not elaborate it further.
73. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.,* 1981, p. 281.
74. J.N. Banerjea, *op.cit.,* 1987, p. 50.
75. D.P. Chattopadyaya, *op.cit.*, 1981, pp. 276-77.
76. According to *Ācārabheda Tantra* (*Viśwa Kośa,* (Bengali), (ed. by N.N. Bose, Calcutta), VII. 512, as referred to by D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *ibid.*, p. 278.) the ultimate female force is to be worshipped by becoming a woman : *vāma bhutvā yajet param*. As such, *vāmācāra* tradition of *Tantra* stands for ritual practices involving the sexual propitiation of women, not as a means of seeking pleasure, but as a ritual union and as total identification with the ultimate reality; the female principle.
77. Emily Kearns, *op.cit.,* 1992, p. 199.
78. *Ibid.,* pp. 199-200.
79. Such as the formulation, 'If Śiva is joined with *Śakti*, he is able to create; if not , the god is not capable of even movement'. (*Saundaryalaharī*, 1).
80. For details ***see*** Chapter 1, Section III.
81. Gritli Von Mitterwaliner, "The Kuṣāṇa Type of the Goddess Mahiṣāsuramardinī as Compared to the Gupta and Medieval Types", in *German Scholars on India,* ed. by the Cultural Department of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Vol. II.
82. *Devī-Māhātmya,* 2.12, 13.
83. *Ibid.,* 2.14-18.
84. *Ibid.*, 2.20-33.
85. ***See*** Chapter 2 for details.
86. Frederick M. Asher, *op.cit.*, 1984, pp. 55-58.
87. Michael Meister, *op. cit.*, *ABA*, Vol. XLVII.
88. Alice Getty, *Ganesa,* Oxford, 1936, pp. 2-3.
89. R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, Varanasi, 1965, pp. 147-48.
90. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *op.cit.,* 1981, Chapter 3.
91. Alice Getty, *op. cit.,* 1936, p. 10.
92. *Atharvaveda,* XIX, 53, 1-2.
93. Marie-Louise Von Franz, *Time — Rhythm and Repose,* Lancashire, 1978, p. 7.
94. *Kūrma Purāṇa*, 1.10.82, as quoted by Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, Princeton, 1981, p. 277.
95. *Skanda Purāṇa*, 4.1.7.91 as quoted by Stella Kramrisch, *ibid.*
96. Stella Kramrisch, *ibid.*

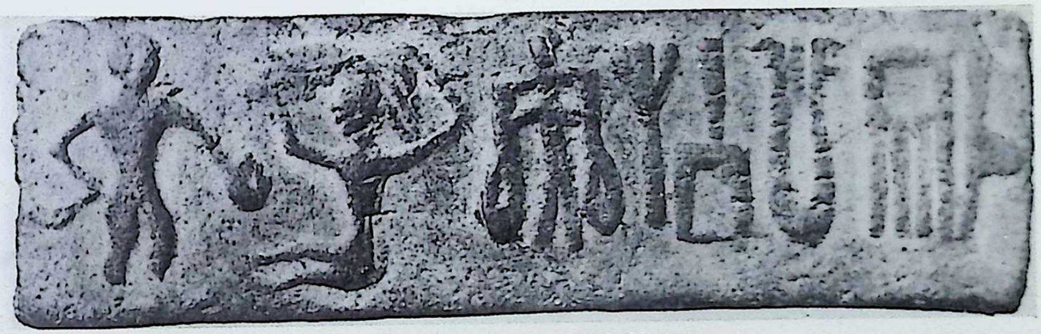


Pl. 1 *The tree worship and seven figures* (proto-Saptamātṛkā?), Mohenjo-Daro.

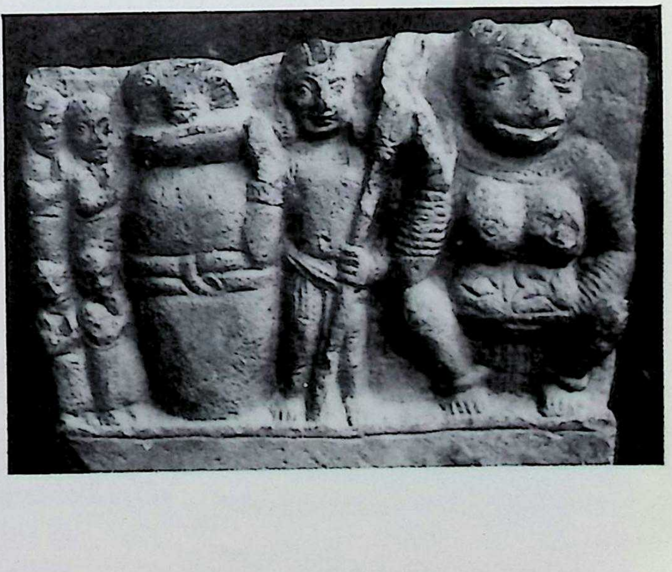
पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल काँगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय



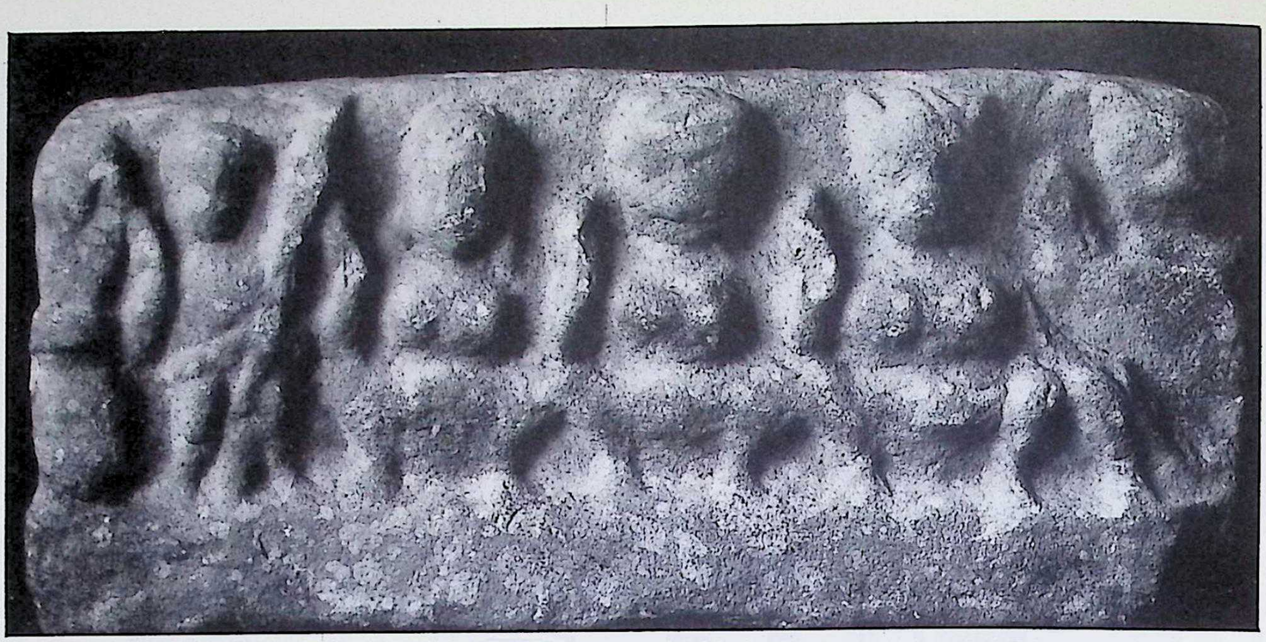
Pl. 2 *Plant delivering figure*, seal, Harappa.



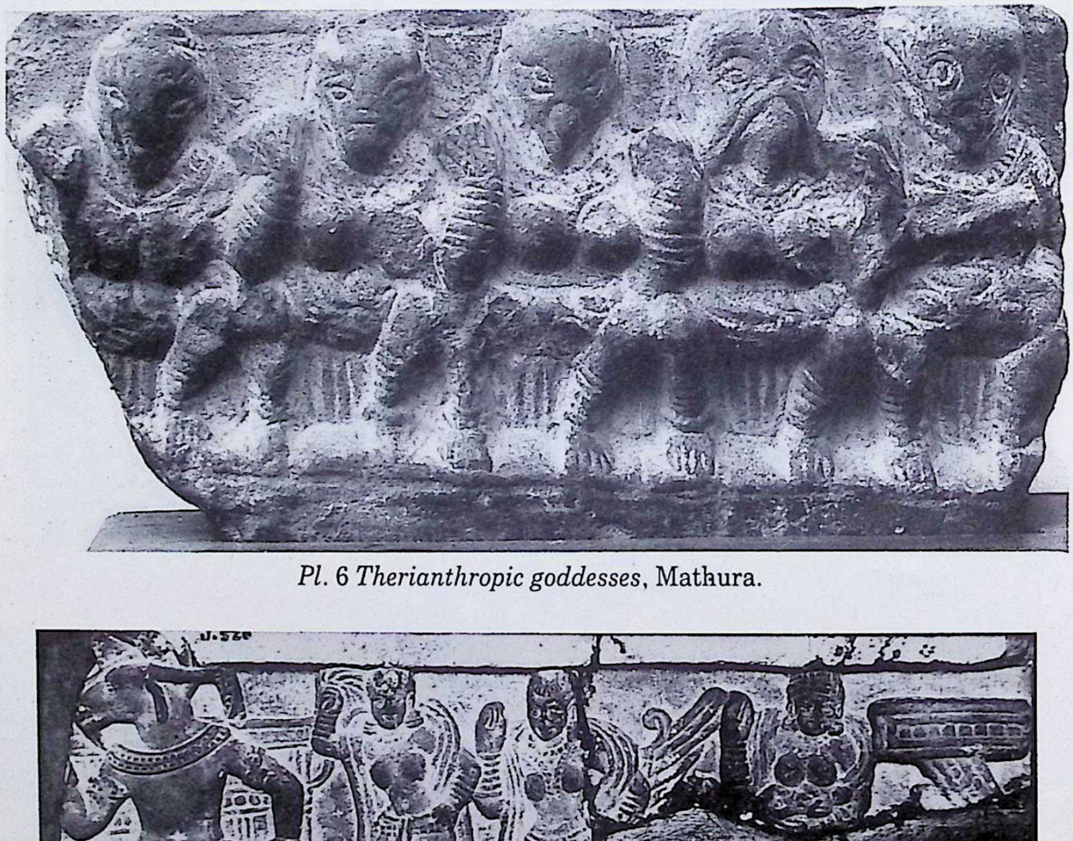
Pl. 3 *Human sacrifice*, seal, Harappa.



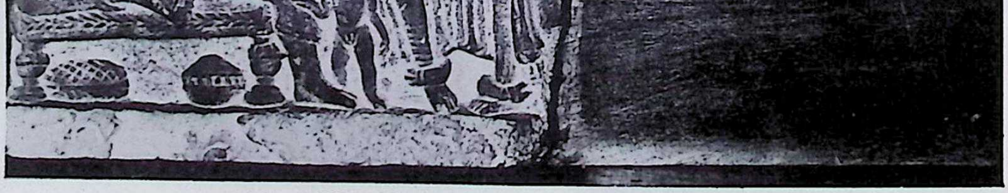
Pl. 4 *Birth of Skanda*, Mathura.



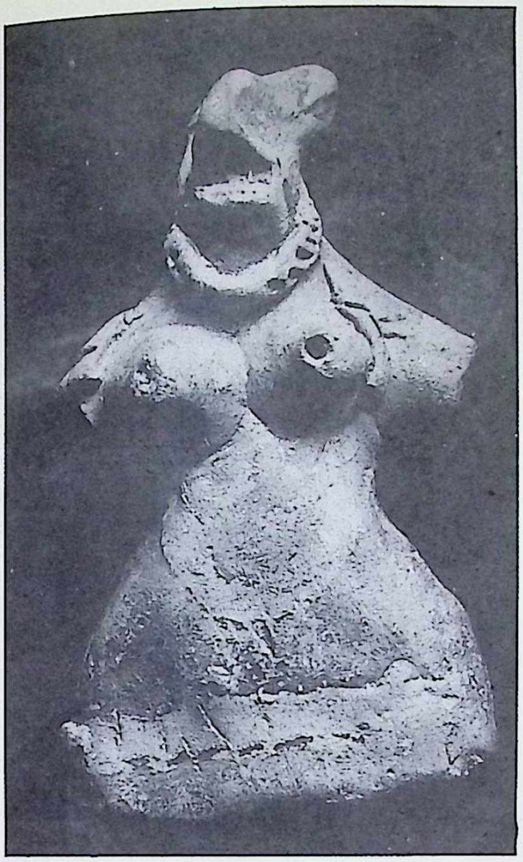
Pl. 5 *Birth of Skanda*, Mathura.



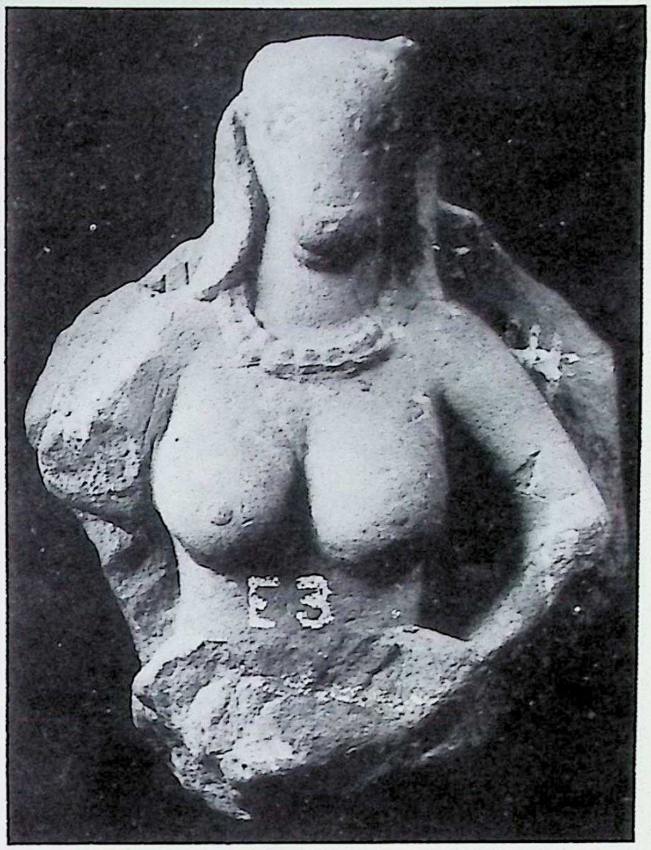
Pl. 6 *Therianthropic goddesses*, Mathura.



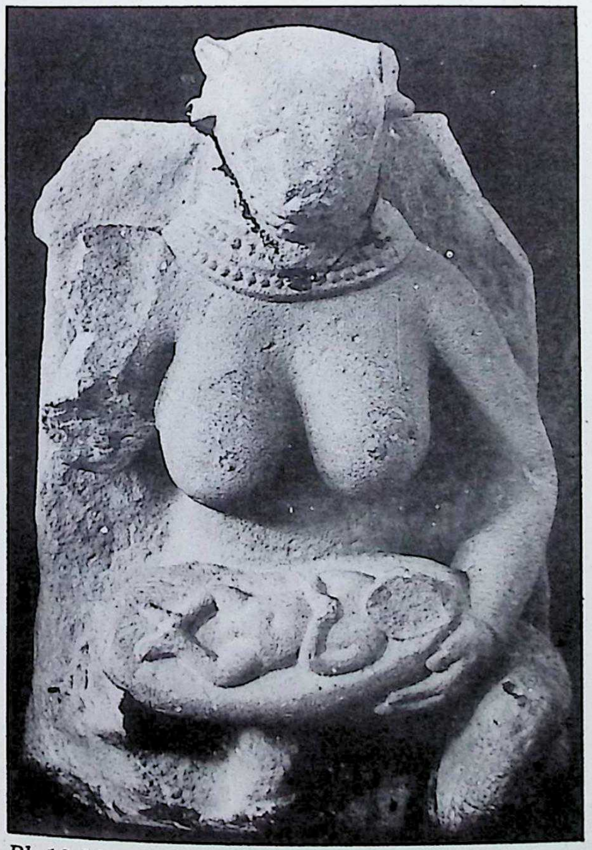
Pl. 7 *Harinaigameṣin*, Mathura.



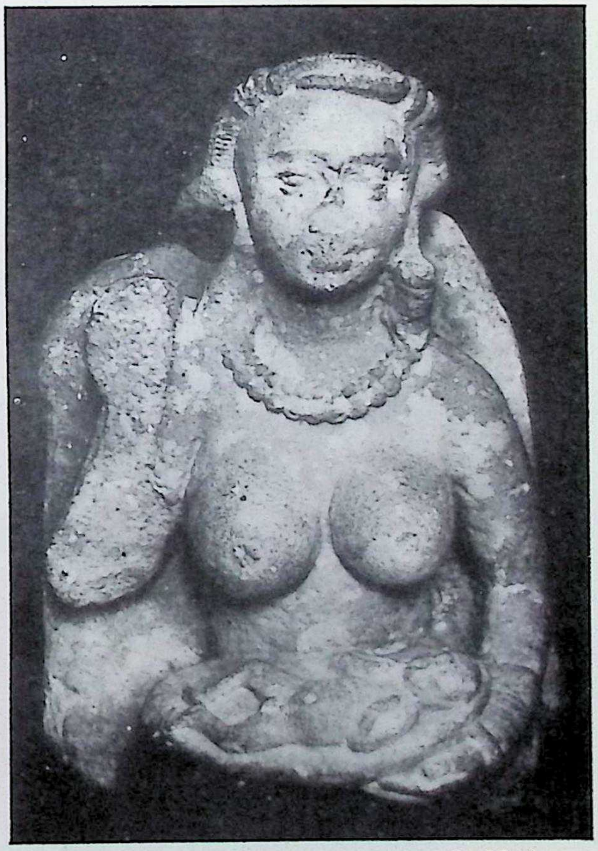
Pl. 8 *Mother-goddess*, terracotta, Mathura.



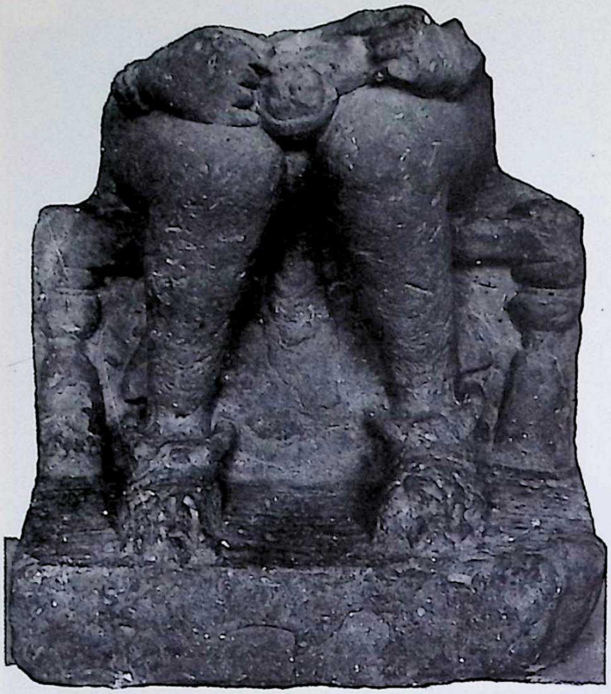
Pl. 9 *Mātṛkā Harinaigameṣin* (?), Mathura.



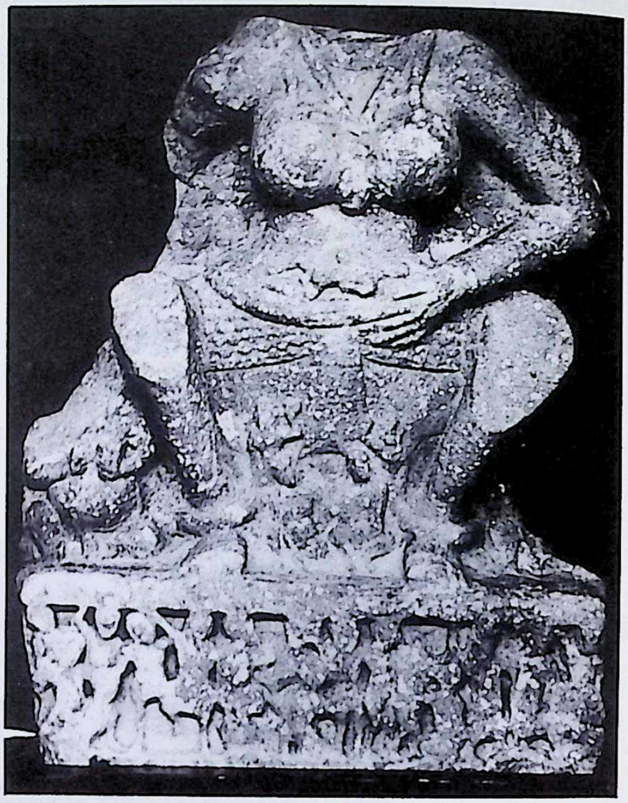
Pl. 10 *Mātṛkā Harinaigameṣin* (?), Mathura.



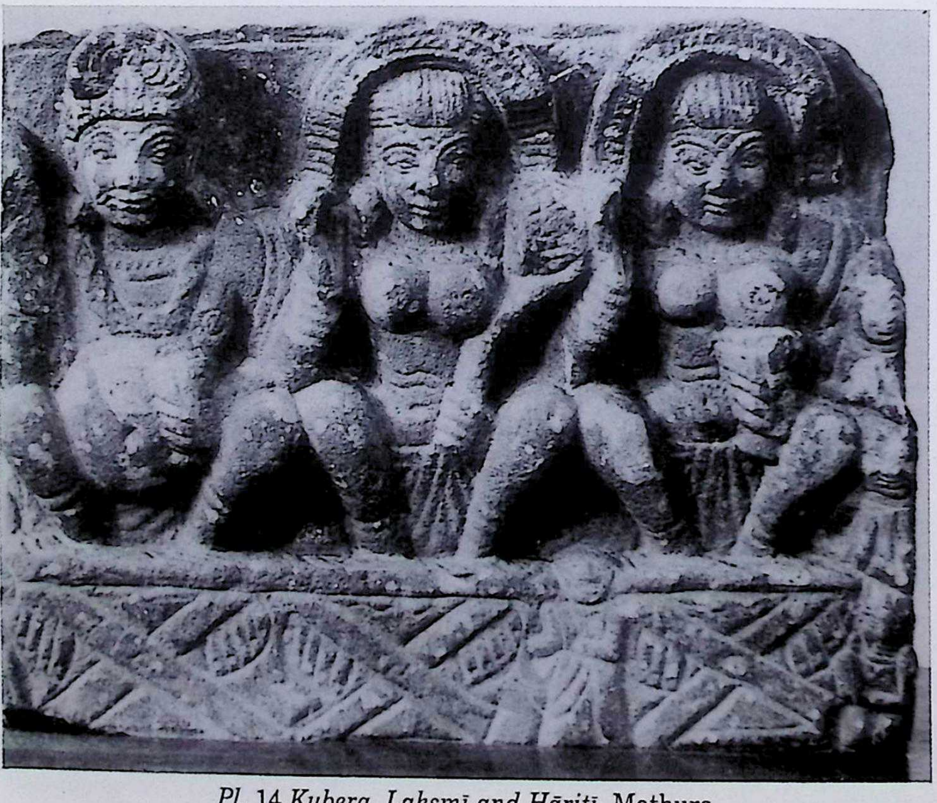
Pl. 11 *Mātṛkā Harinaigameṣin* (?), Mathura.



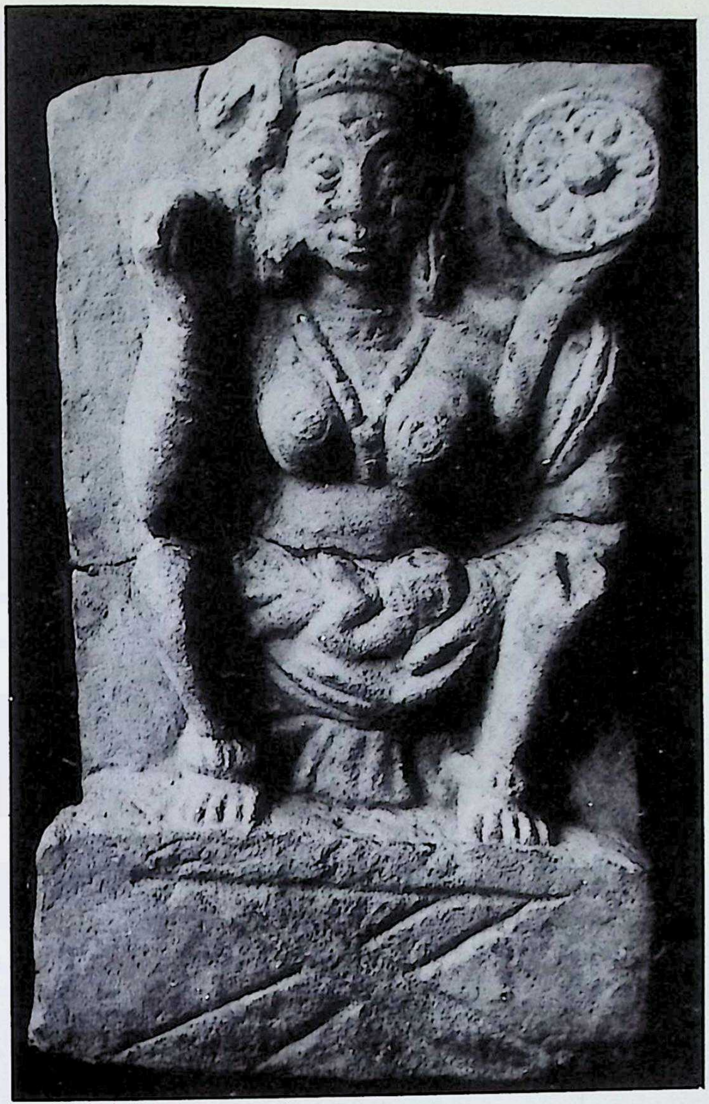
Pl. 12 *Hāritī*, Mathura.



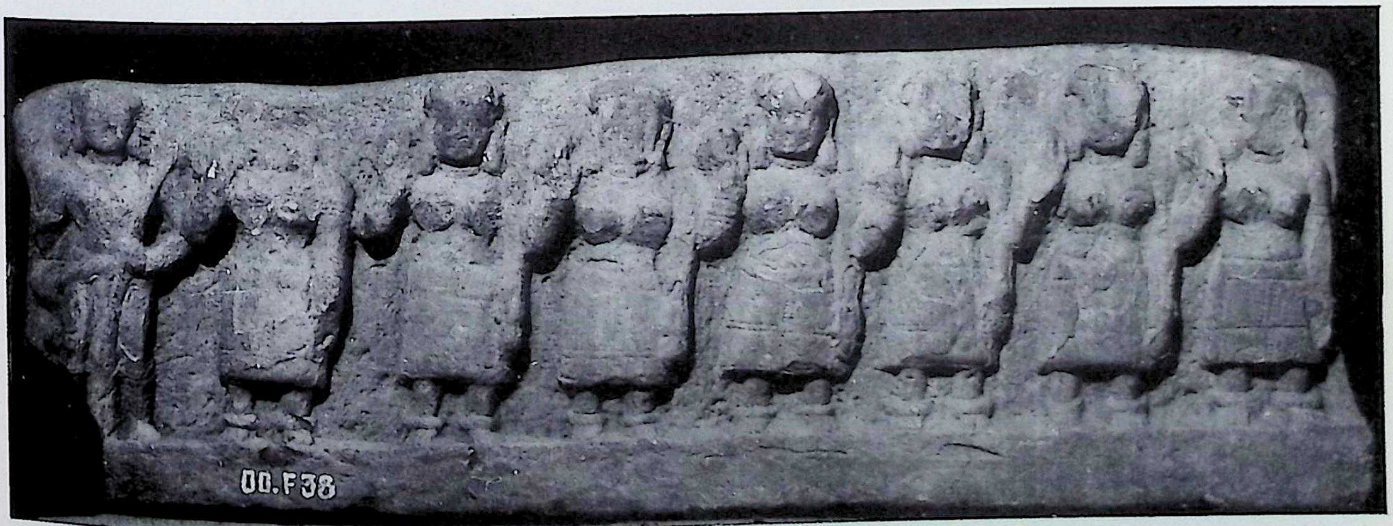
Pl. 13 *Hāritī*, Mathura.



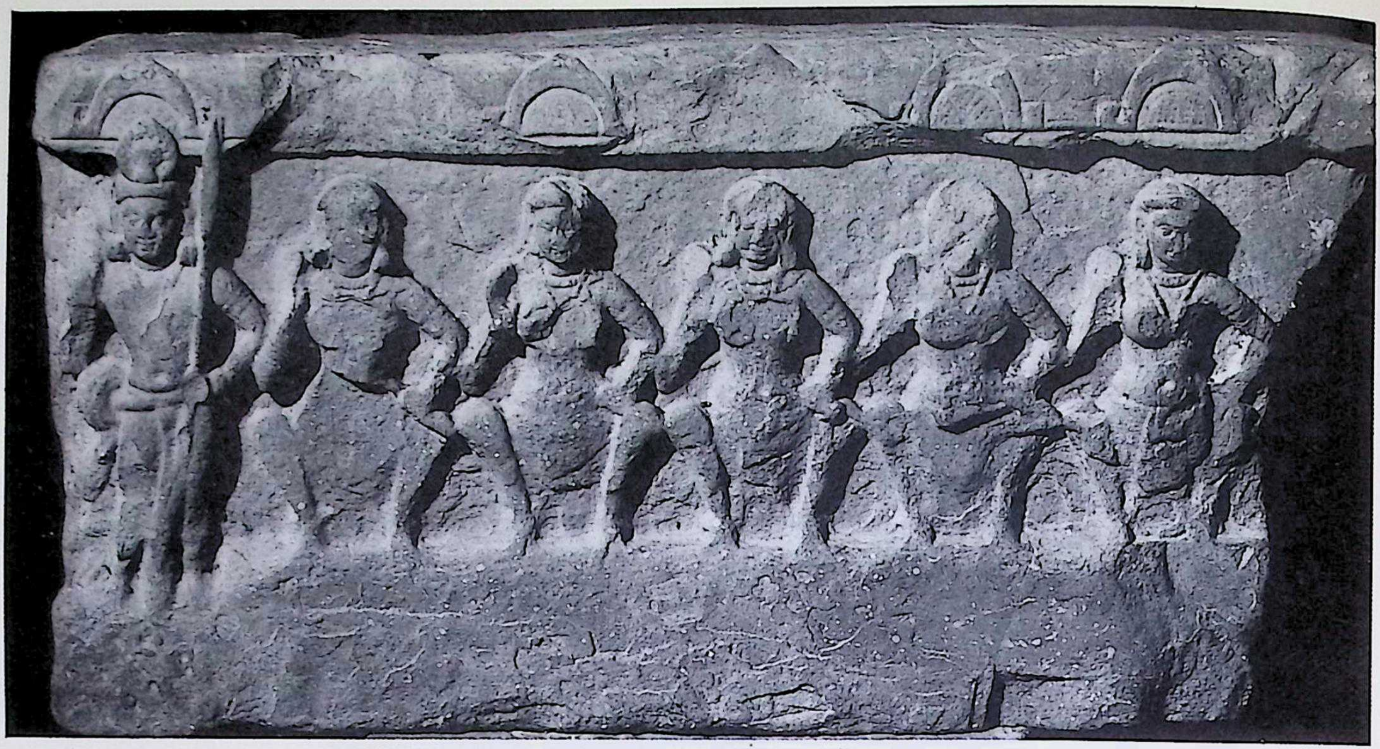
Pl. 14 *Kubera, Lakṣmī and Hāritī*, Mathura.



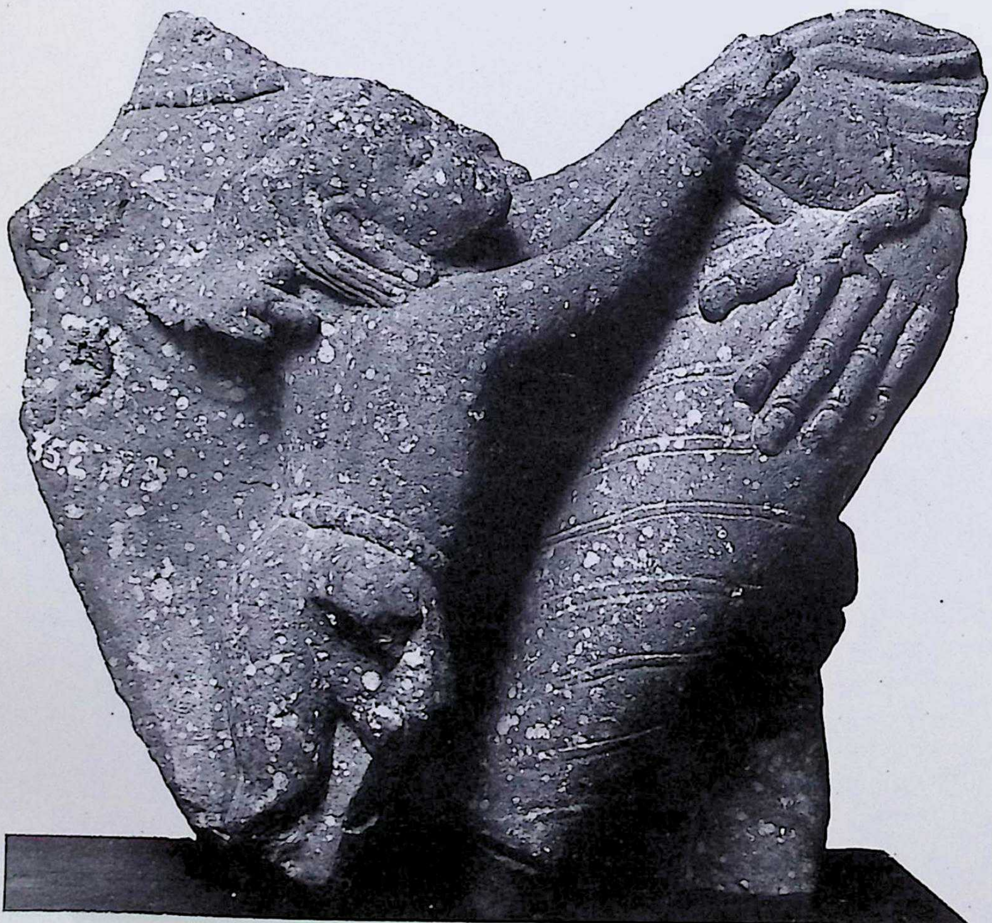
Pl. 15 *Śrī-Lakṣmī*, Mathura.



Pl. 16 *Sapta Ṛṣi Patnīs and Skanda*, Mathura.

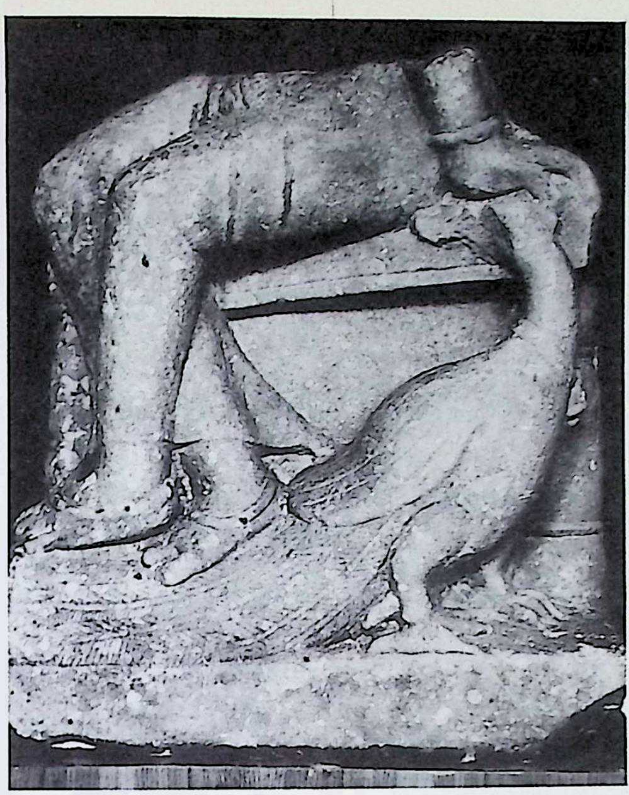


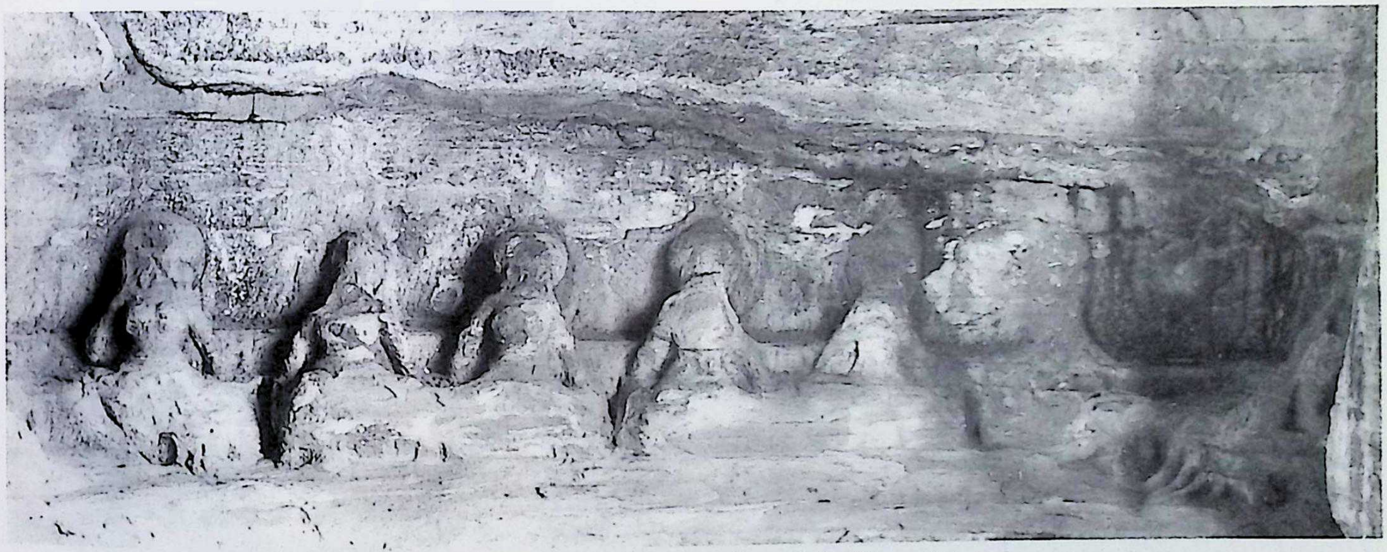
Pl. 17 *Five seated Mātṛkās along with Skanda*, Mathura.



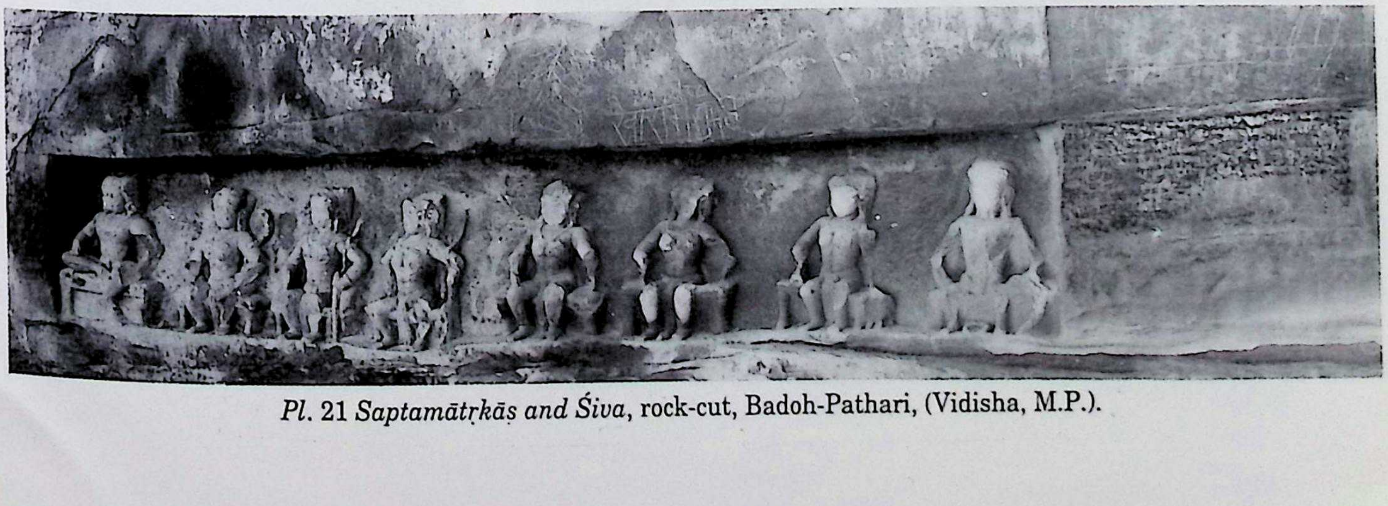
Pl. 18 *Skanda and Mātṛkā.*

Pl. 19 *Kaumāri* (?), Mathura.

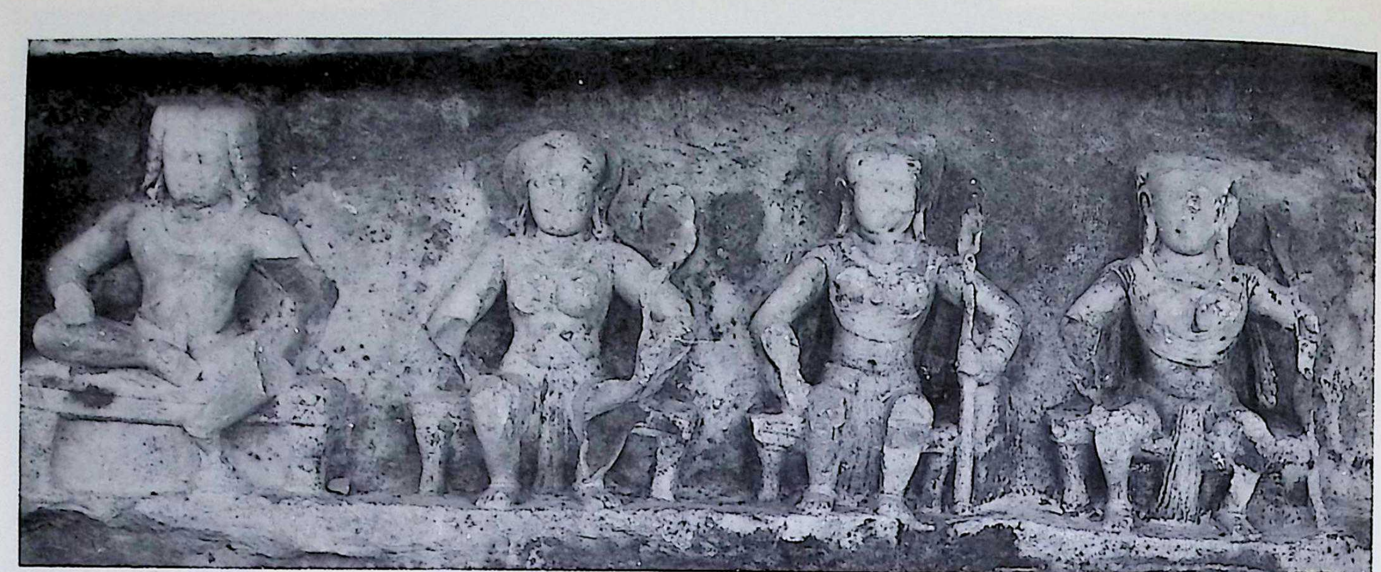




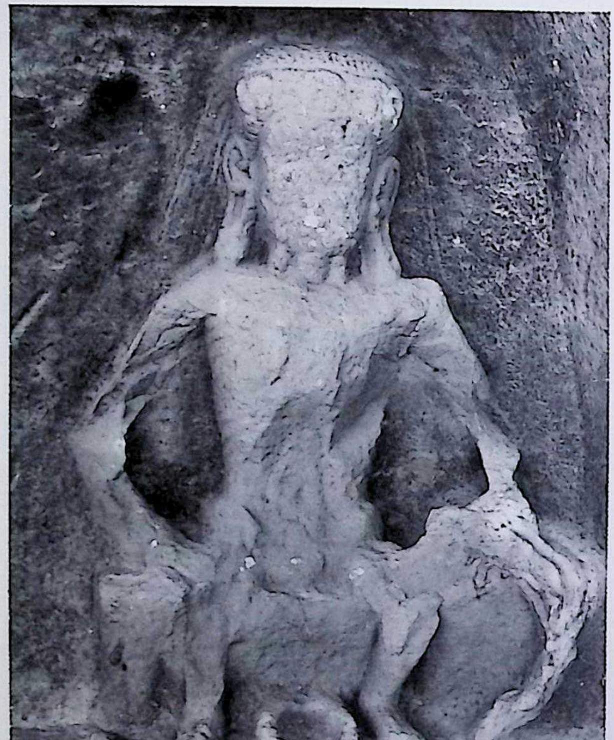
Pl. 20 *Saptamātṛkā group*, Cave 6-A, Udayagiri.



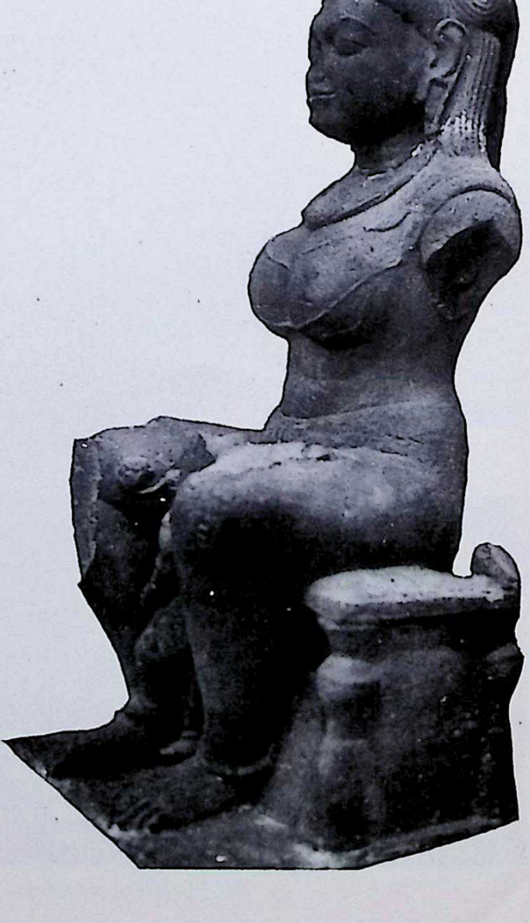
Pl. 21 *Saptamātṛkāṣ and Śiva*, rock-cut, Badoh-Pathari, (Vidisha, M.P.).



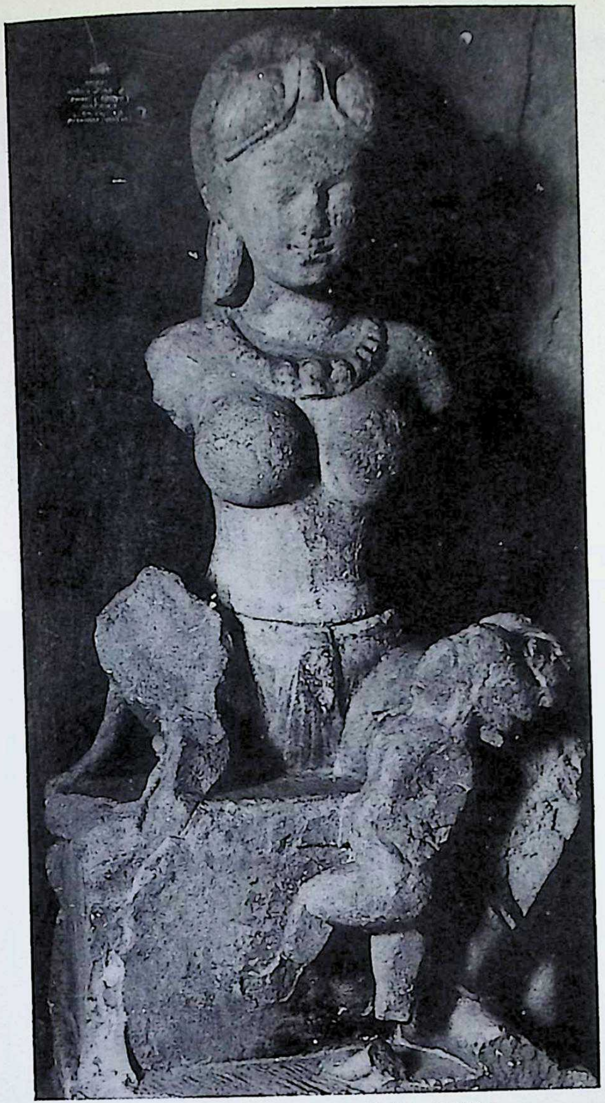
Pl. 22 *Śiva, Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī and Kaumāri* (?), *Saptamātṛkā group* (*detail*), rock-cut, Bodoh-pathari, (Vidisha, M.P.)..



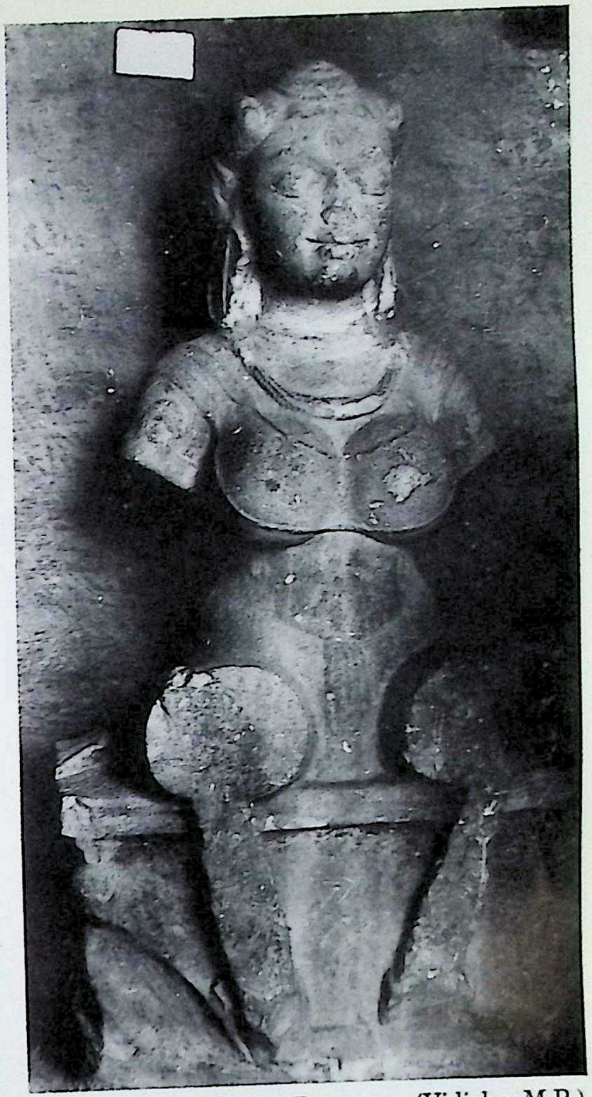
Pl. 23 *Cāmuṇḍā, Saptamātṛkā group* (*detail*), rock-cut, Badoh-Pathari, (Vidisha, M.P.).



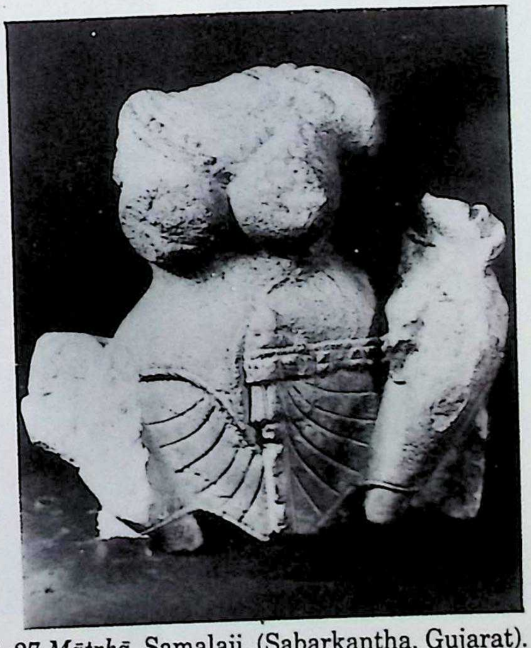
Pl. 24 *Mātṛkā*, Besnagar, (Vidisha, M.P.).



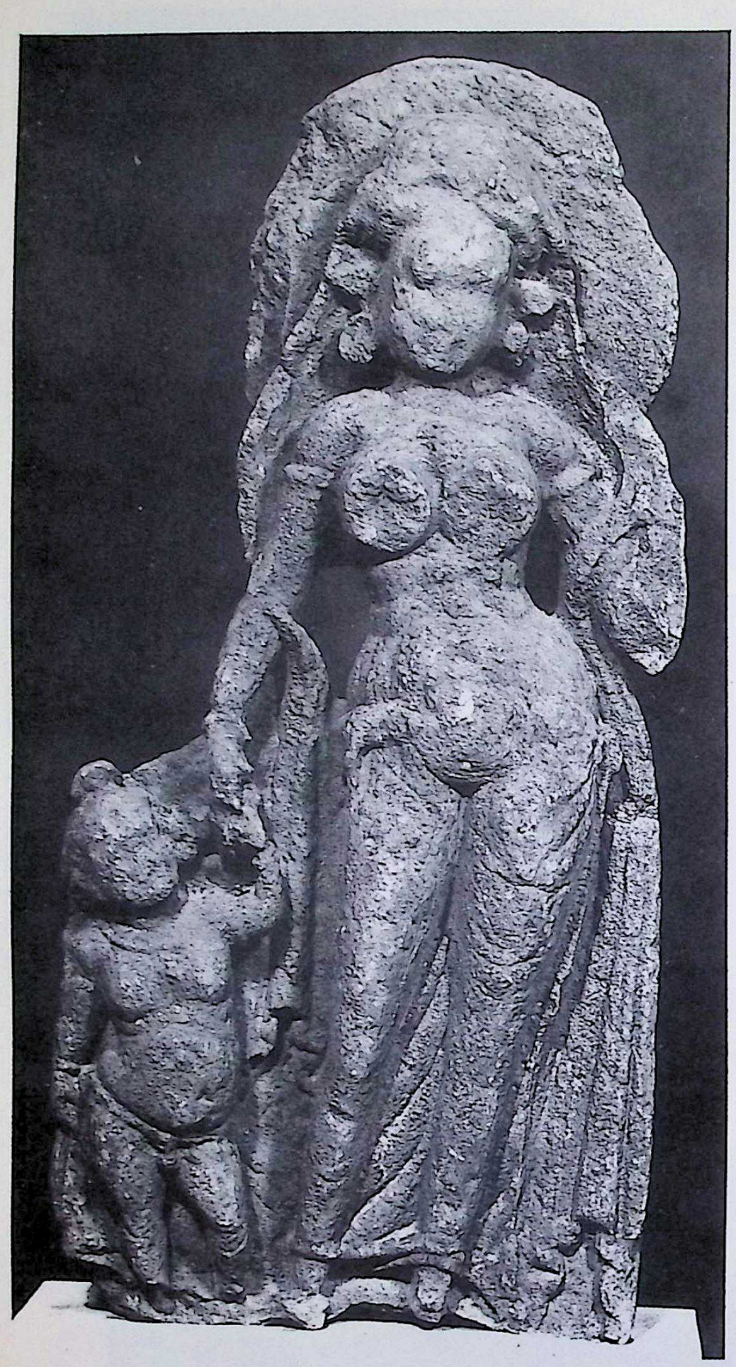
Pl. 25 *Mātṛkā*, Besnagar, (Vidisha, M.P.).



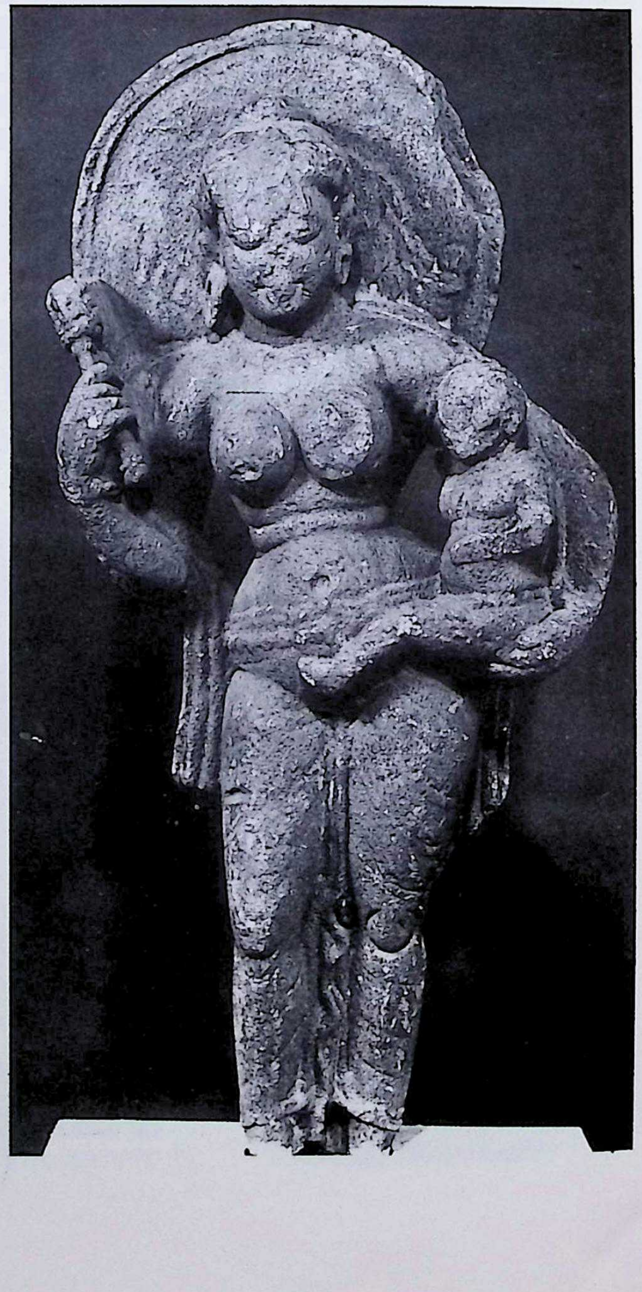
Pl. 26 *Mātṛkā*, Besnagar, (Vidisha, M.P.).



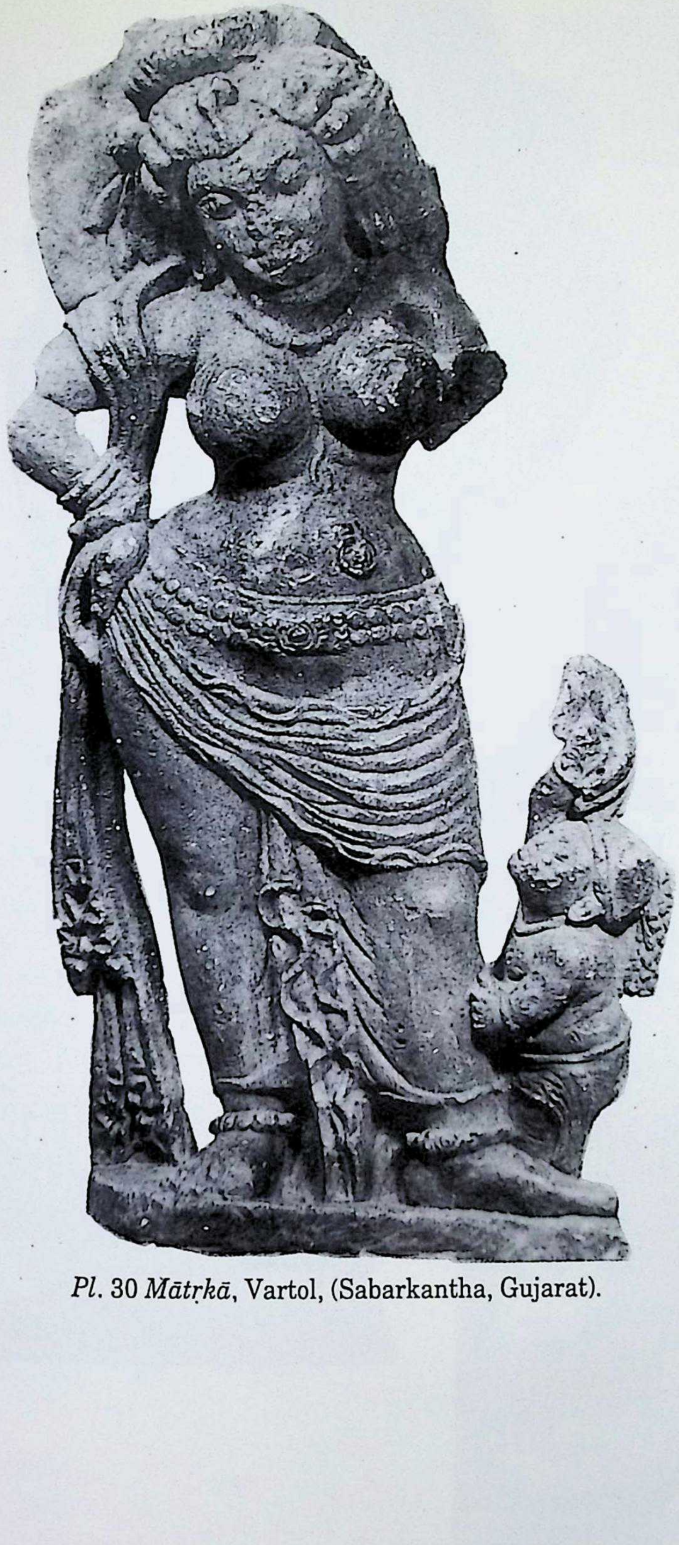
Pl. 27 *Mātṛkā*, Samalaji, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



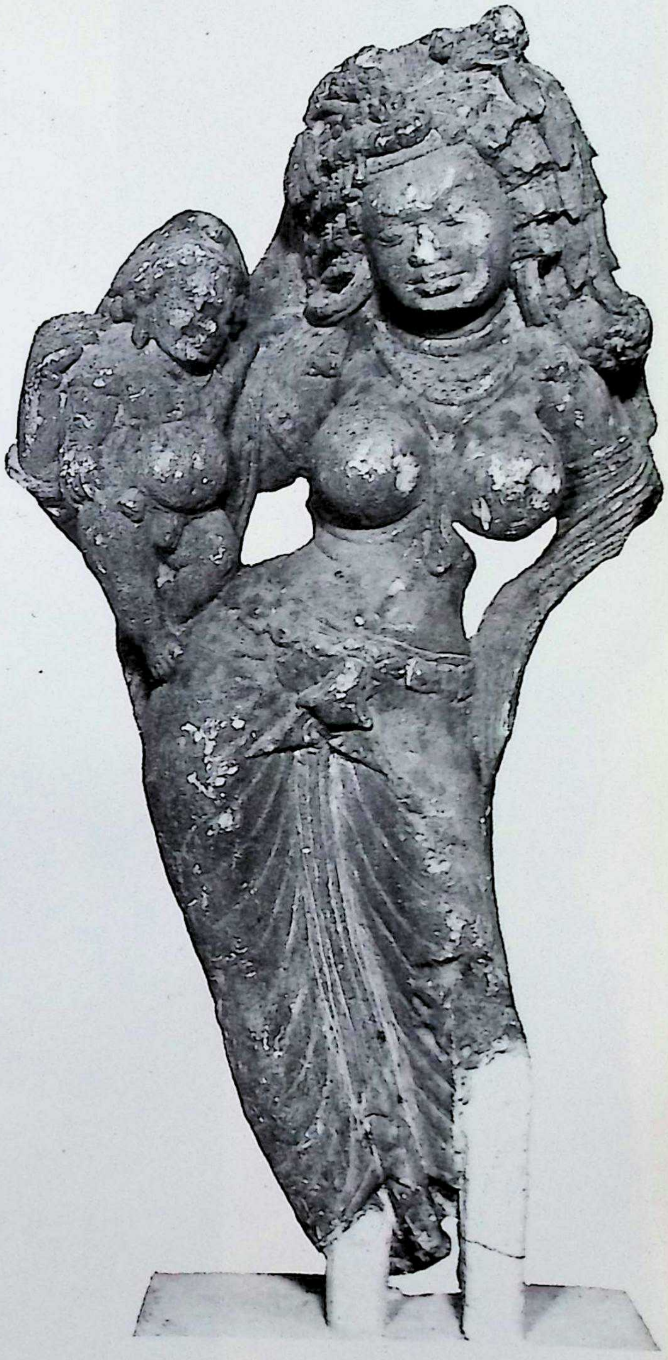
Pl. 28 *Mātṛkā*, Devnimori, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



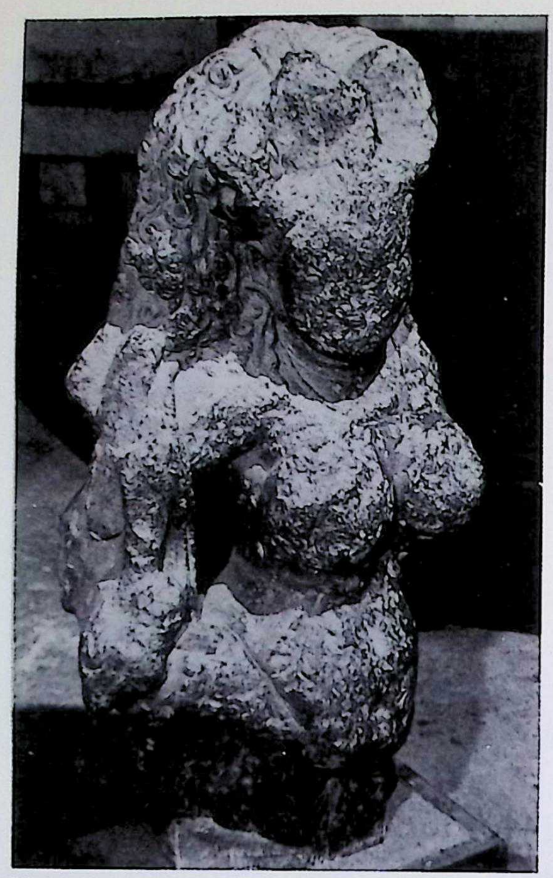
Pl. 29 *Mātṛkā*, Devnimori, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



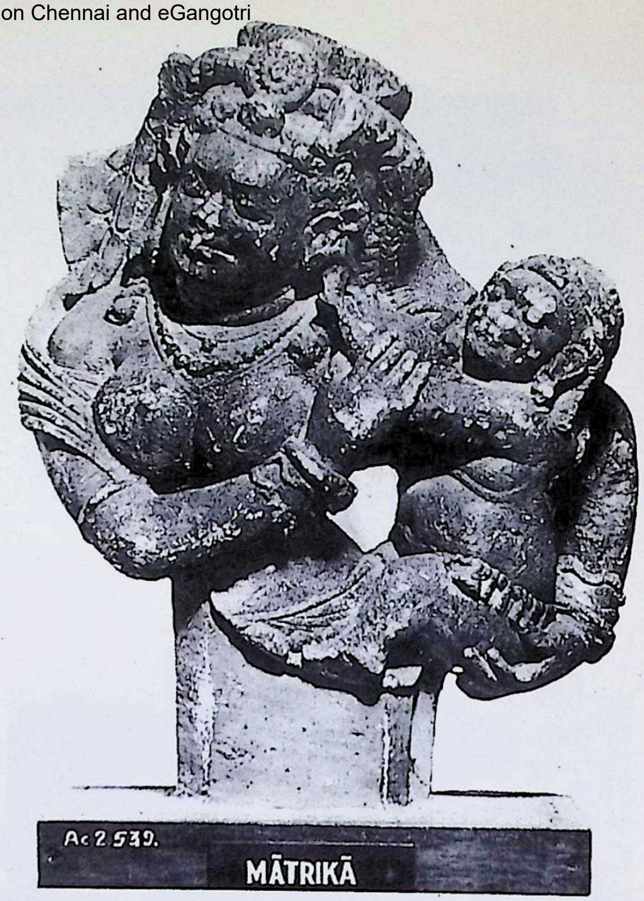
Pl. 30 *Mātṛkā*, Vartol, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



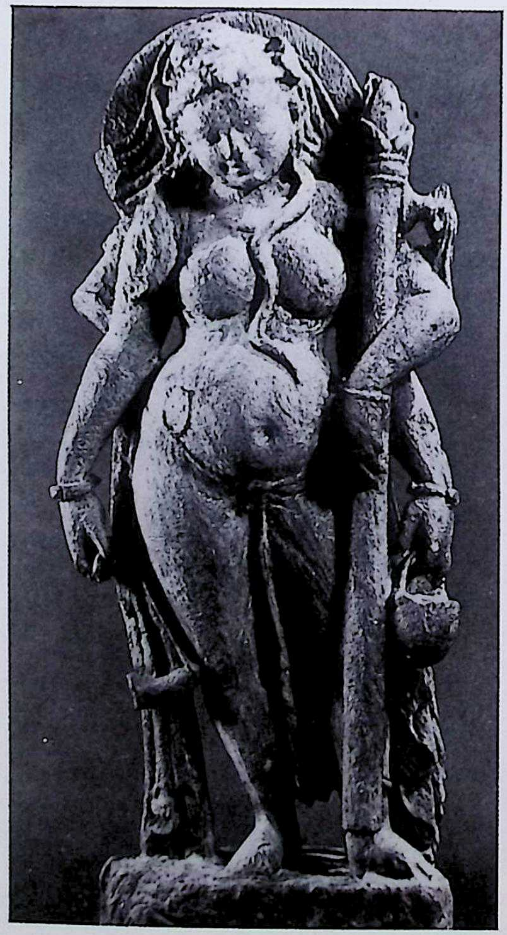
Pl. 31 *Mātṛkā*, Samalaji (group-A), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat).



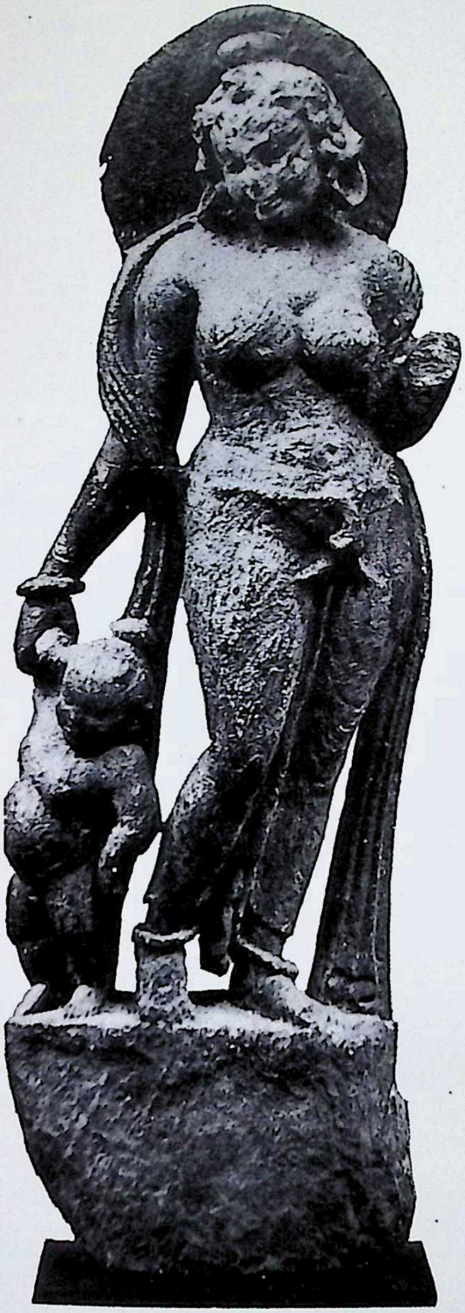
Pl. 32 *Cāmuṇḍā*,
Samalaji, (group-A),
(Sabarkantha,Gujarat).



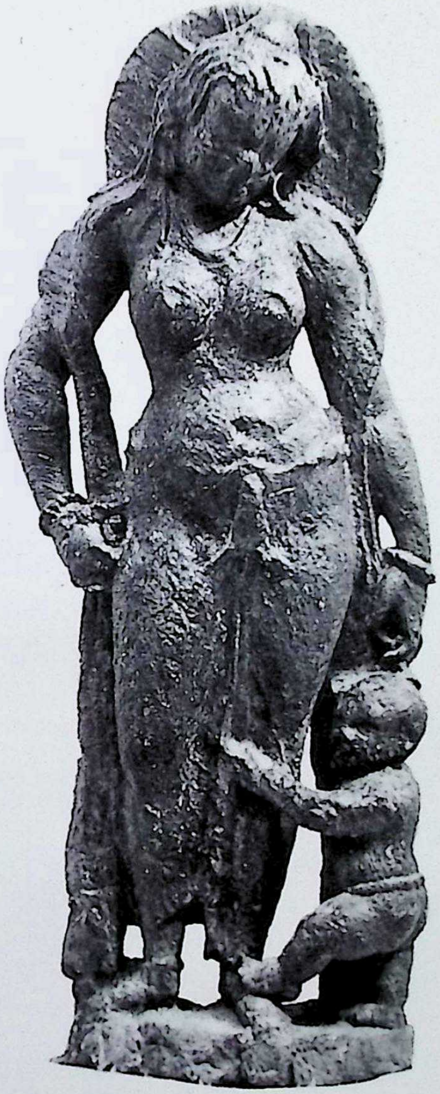
Pl. 33 *Mātṛkā*, Samalaji,
(group-A), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat).



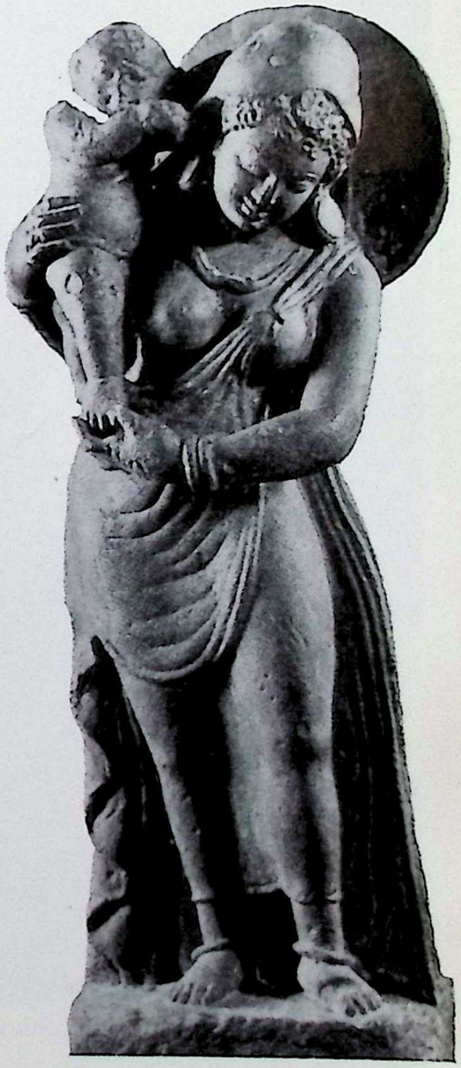
Pl. 34 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Tanesara,
(group-A), (Udaipur, Rajasthan).



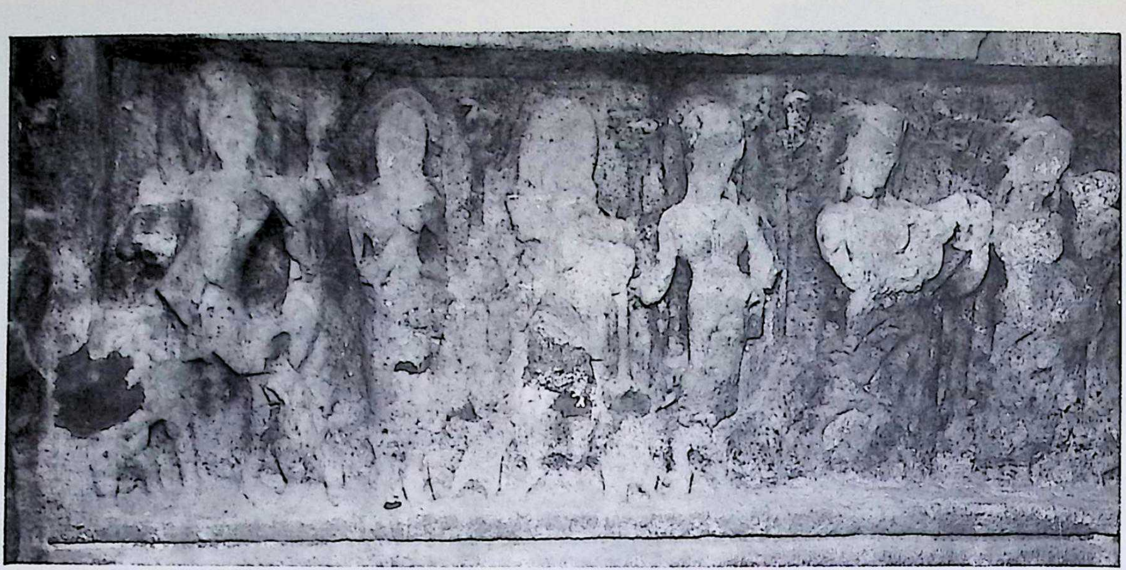
Pl. 35 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-A), (Udaipur, Rajasthan).



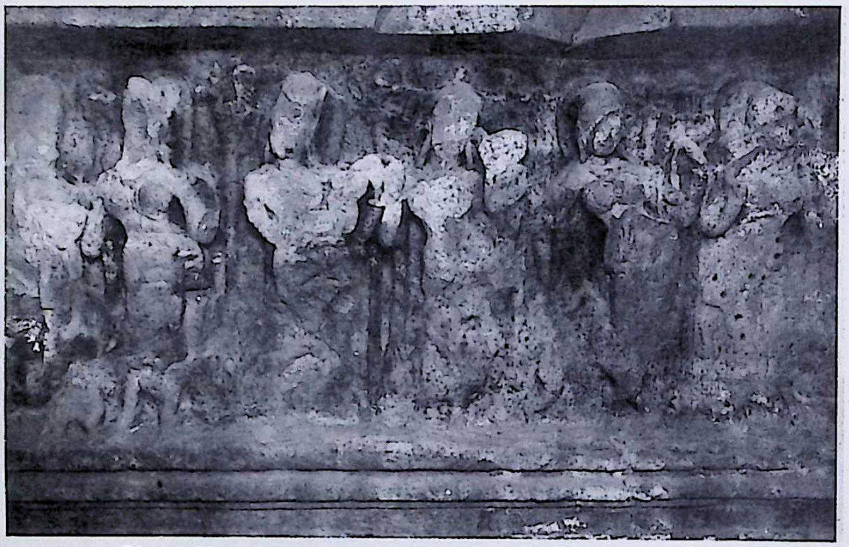
Pl. 36 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-A), (Udaipur, Rajasthan).



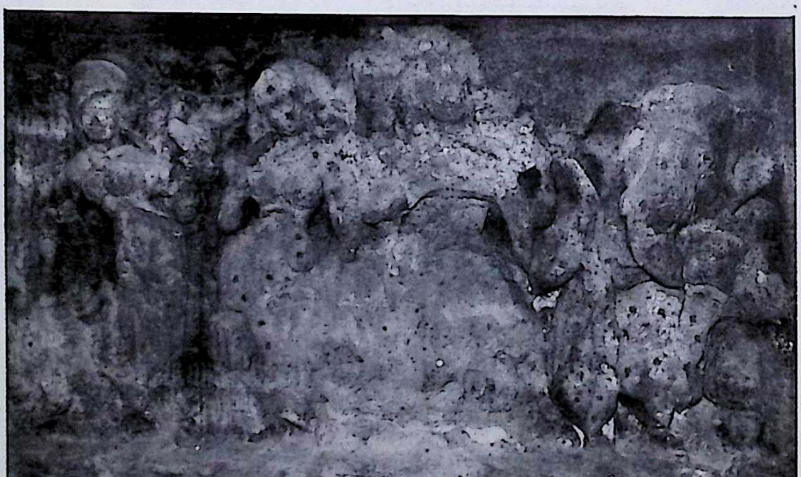
Pl. 37 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-B), (Udaipur, Rajasthan).



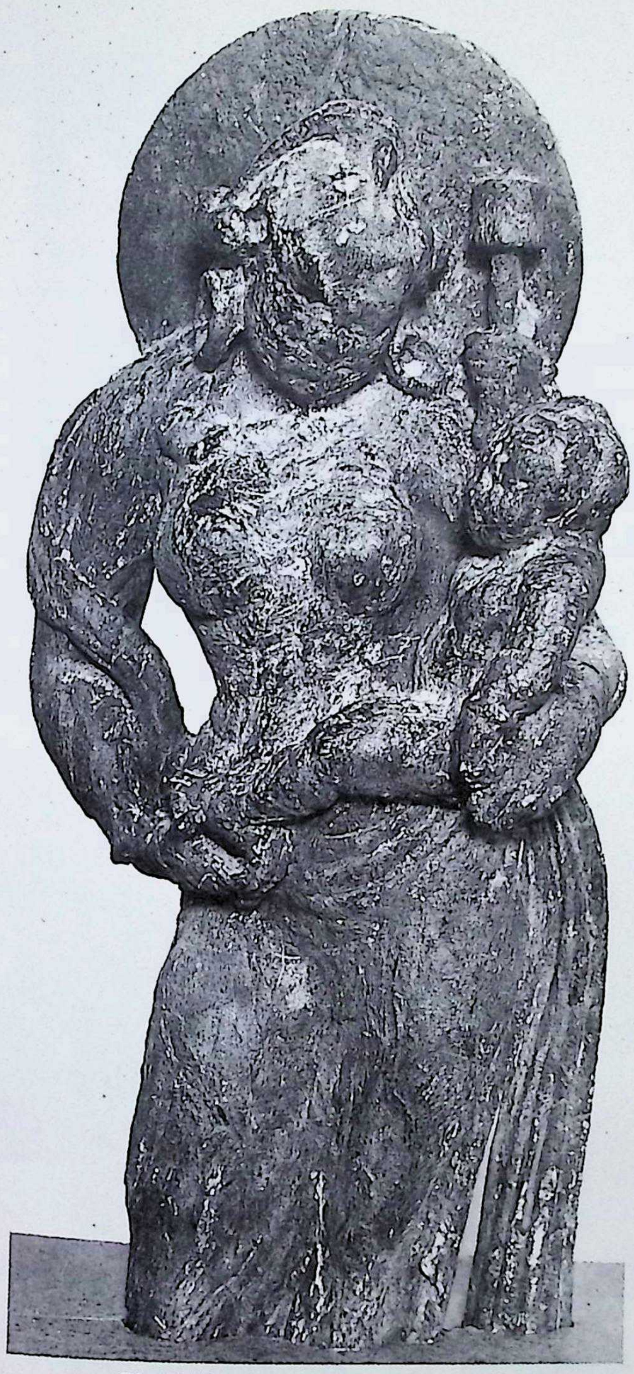
Pl. 38 *Śiva and Saptamatṛkā group*, Elephanta (Kolaba, Maharashtra).



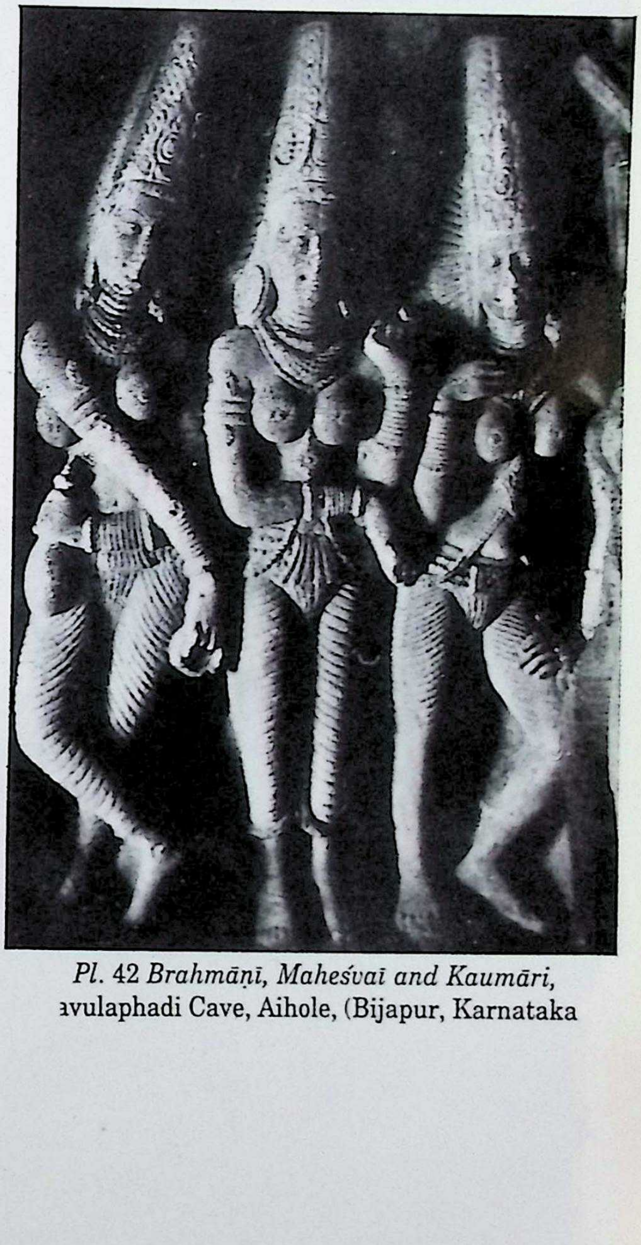
Pl. 39 *Kaumāri, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Saptamātṛkā group*, Elephanta (Kolaba, Maharashtra).



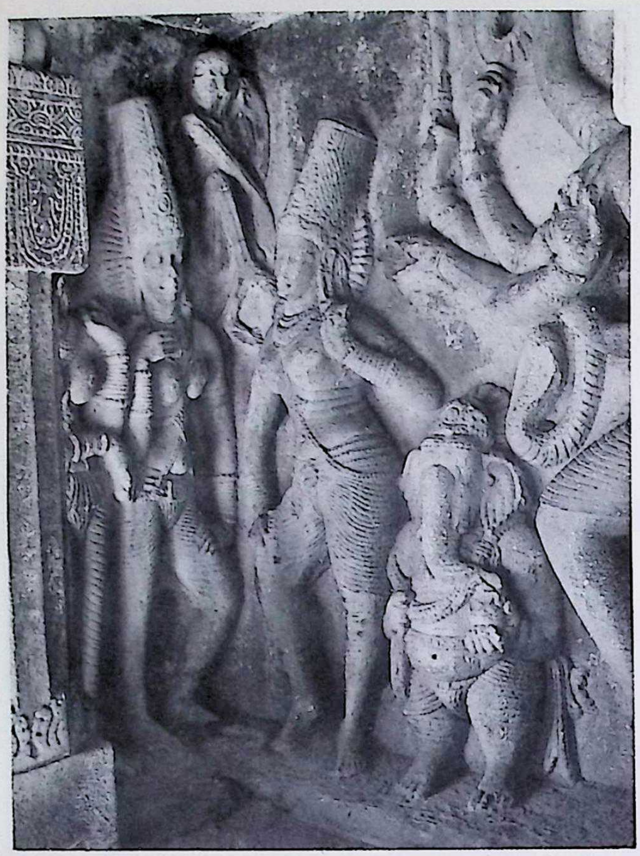
Pl. 40 *Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Devī and Gaṇeśa, Saptamātṛkā group*, Elephanta (Kolaba, Maharashtra).



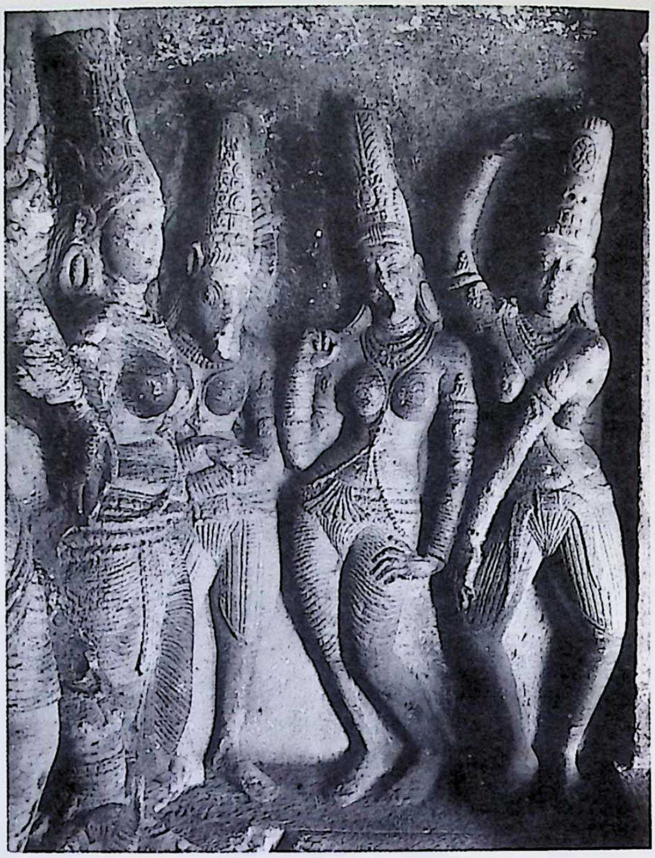
Pl. 41 *Mātṛkā*, Tanesara, (group-B), (Udaipur, Rajasthan).



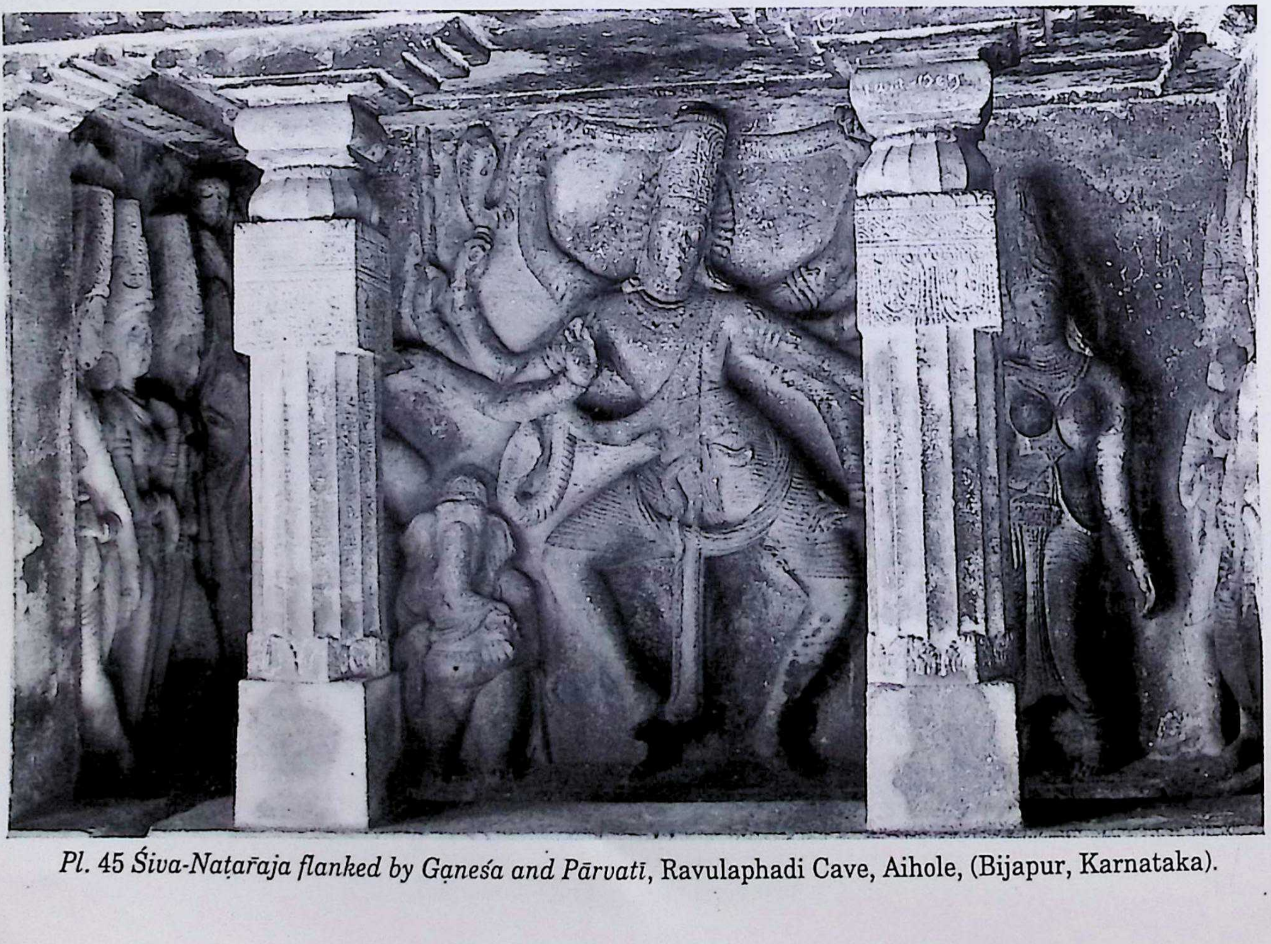
Pl. 42 *Brahmāṇī, Maheśvaī and Kaumāri,* avulaphadi Cave, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka



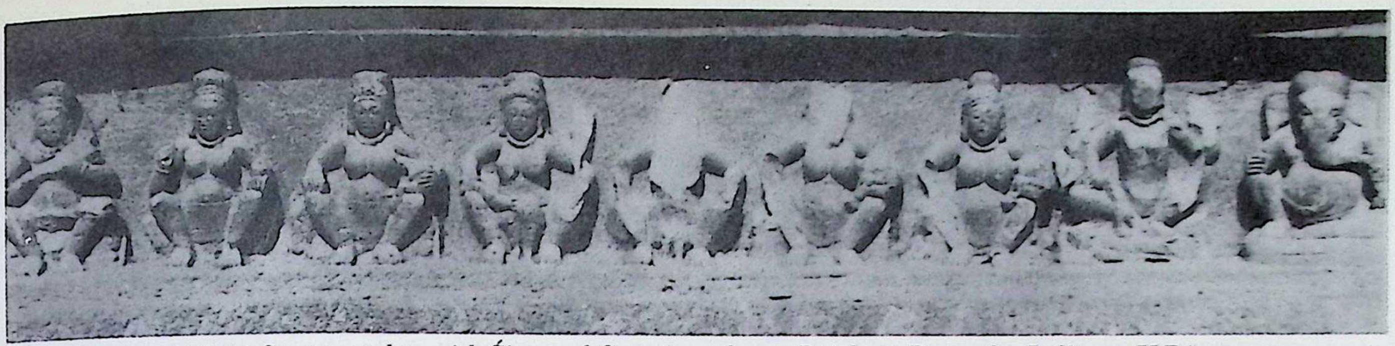
Pl. 43 *Kaumāri, Kāla Bhairava and Vaiṣṇavī.*



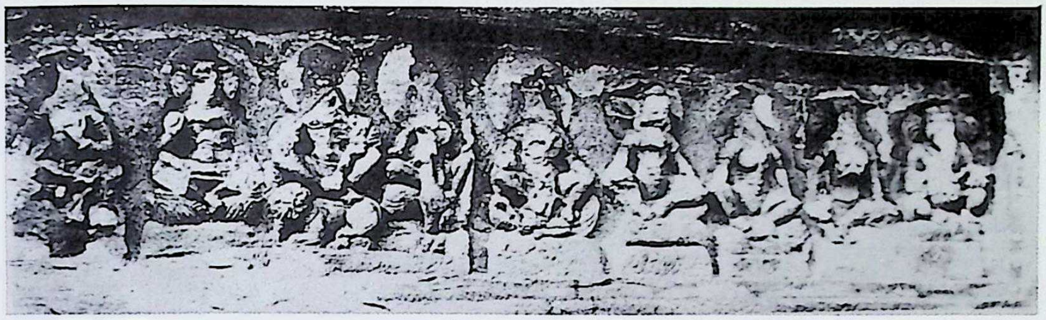
Pl. 44 *Vārāhī, Aindri and Cāmuṇḍā*, Ravulaphadi Cave, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka).



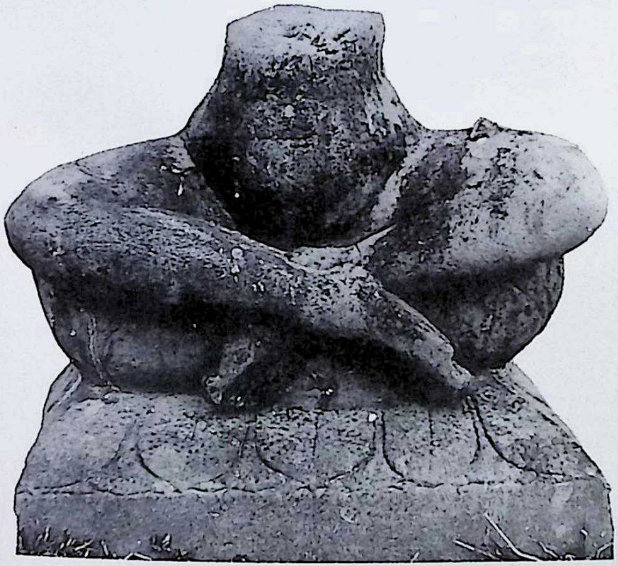
Pl. 45 *Śiva-Naṭarāja flanked by Gaṇeśa and Pārvatī*, Ravulaphadi Cave, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka).



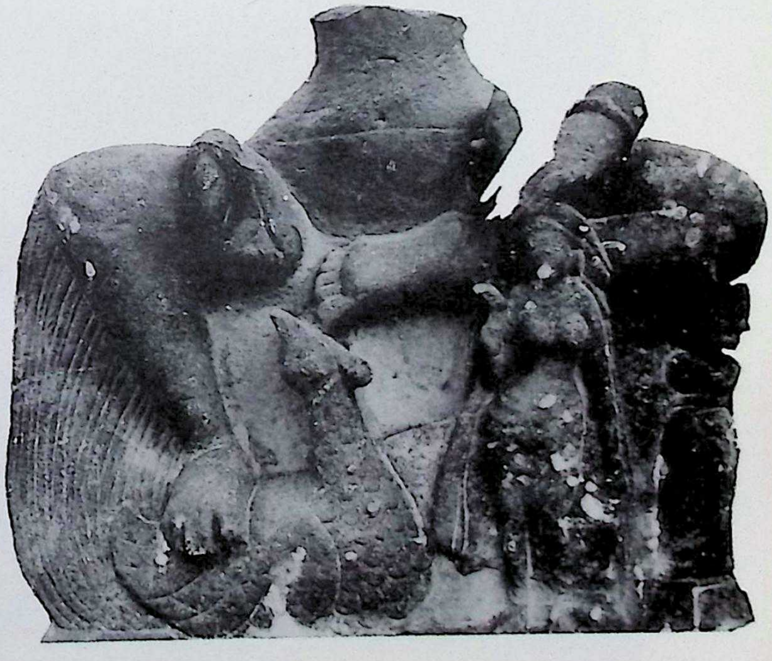
Pl. 46 *Saptamātṛkās with Śiva and Gaṇeśa*, rock-cut, Rajghati, Deogarh, (Lalitpur, U.P.).



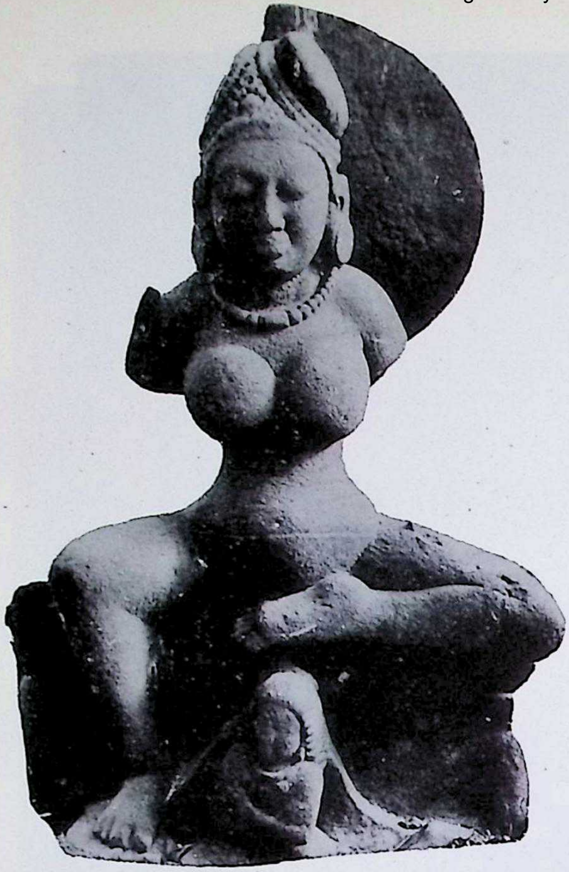
Pl. 47 *Saptamātṛkās with Ganeśa and Śiva*, rock-cut, Naharghati, Deogarh, (Lalitpur, U.P.).



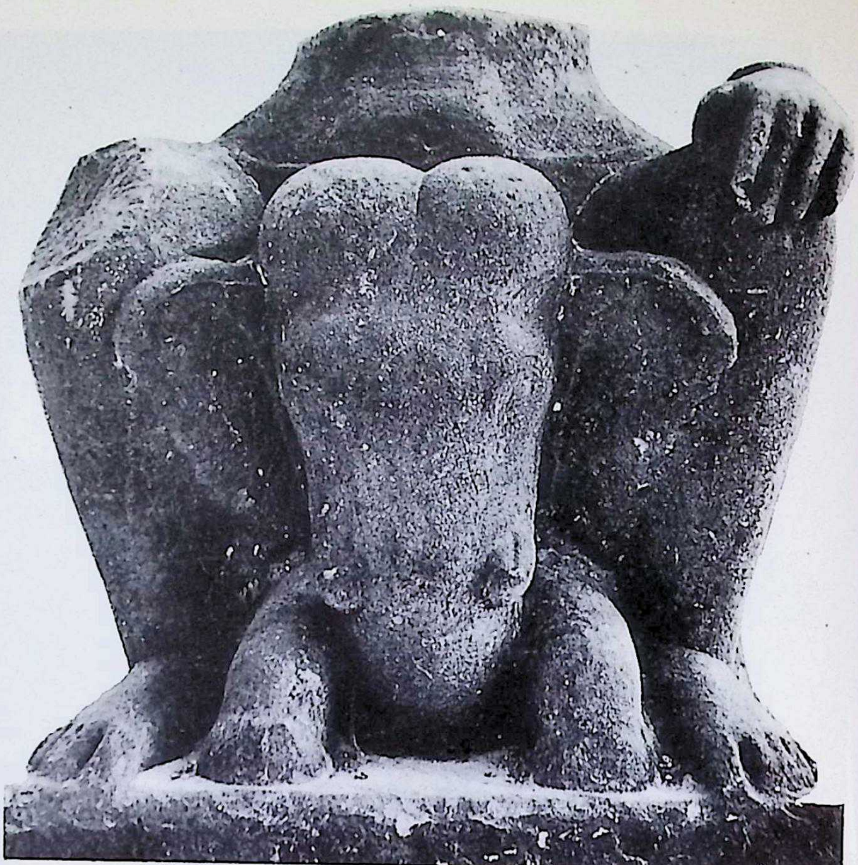
Pl. 48 *Brahmāṇī*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.).



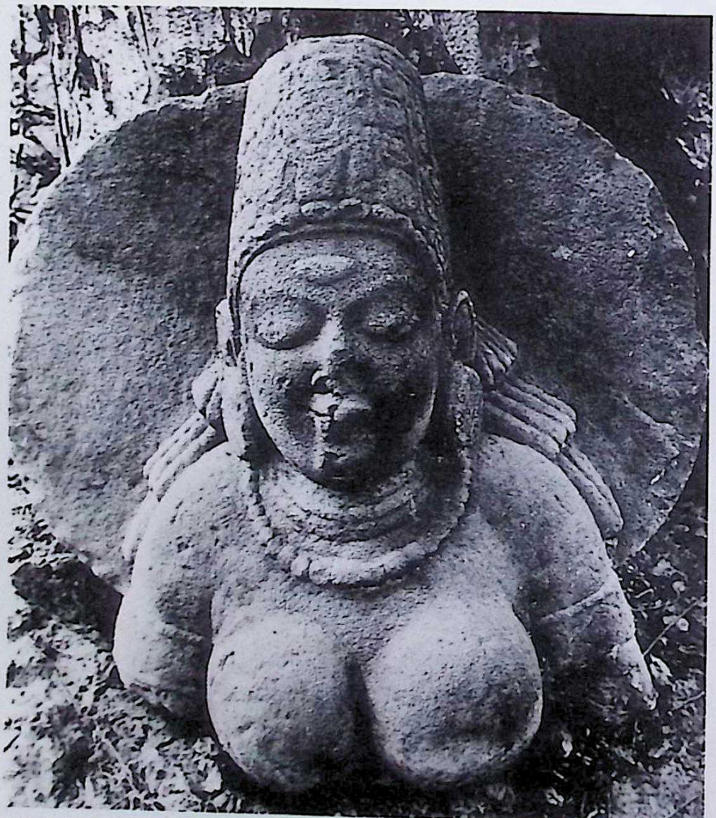
Pl. 49 *Kaumāri*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.).



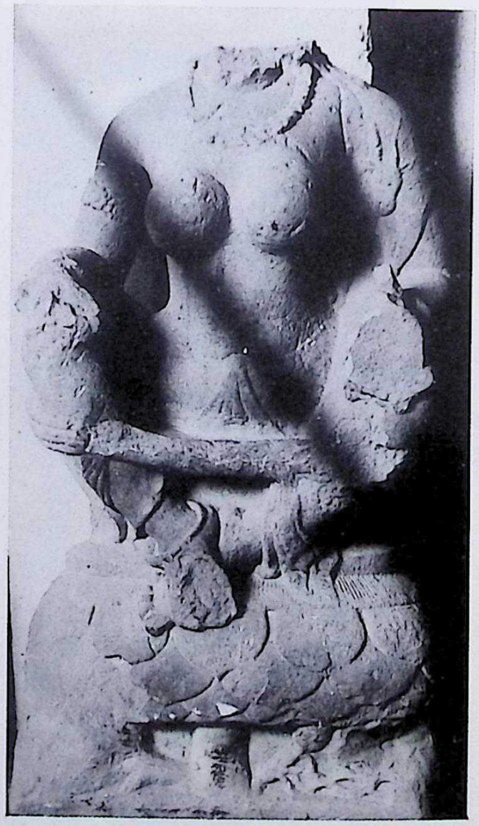
Pl. 50 *Vaiṣṇavī*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.).



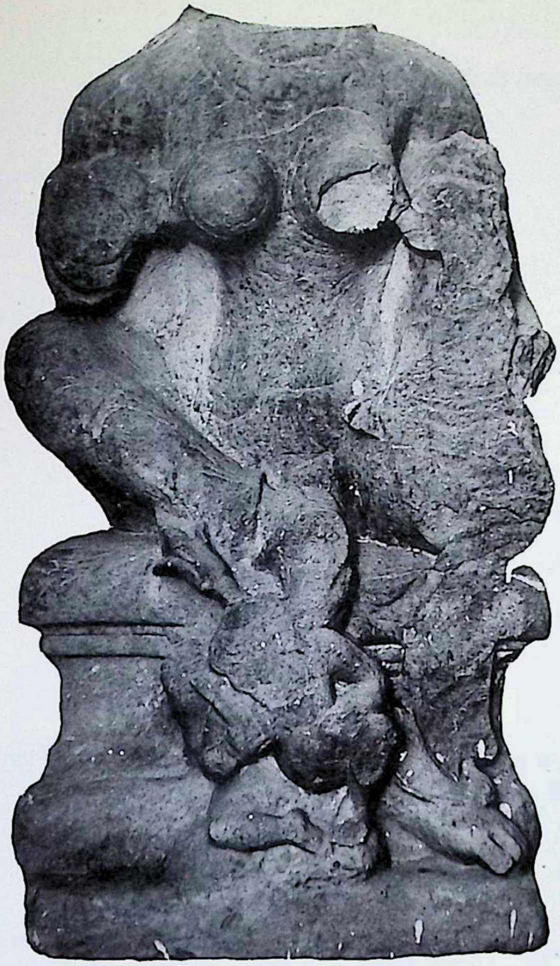
Pl. 51 *Aindri*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.).



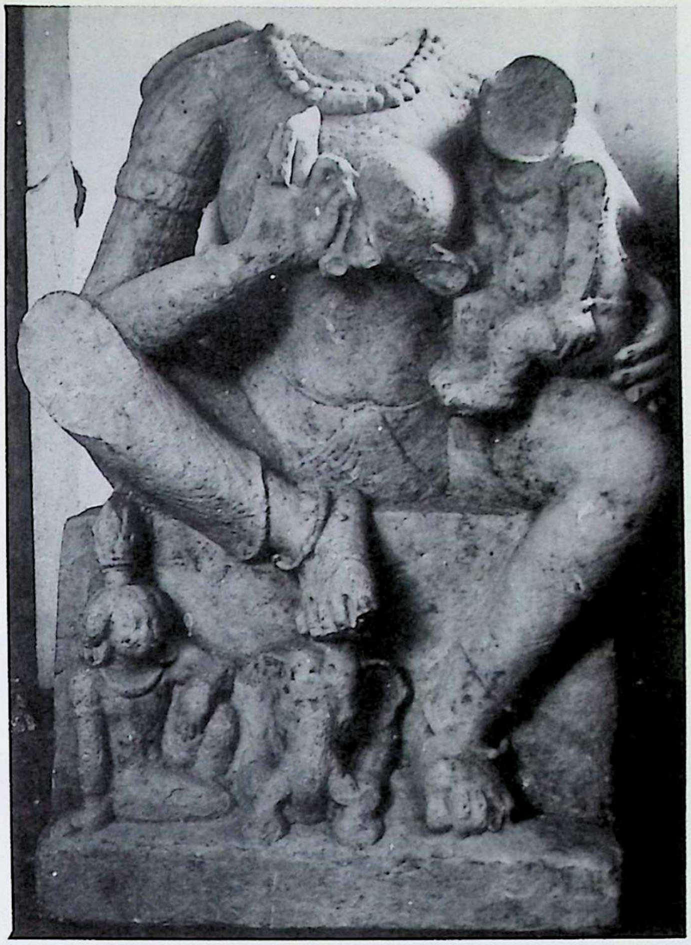
Pl. 52 *Bust of Aindri*, (group-A), Nand-Chand, (Panna, M.P.).



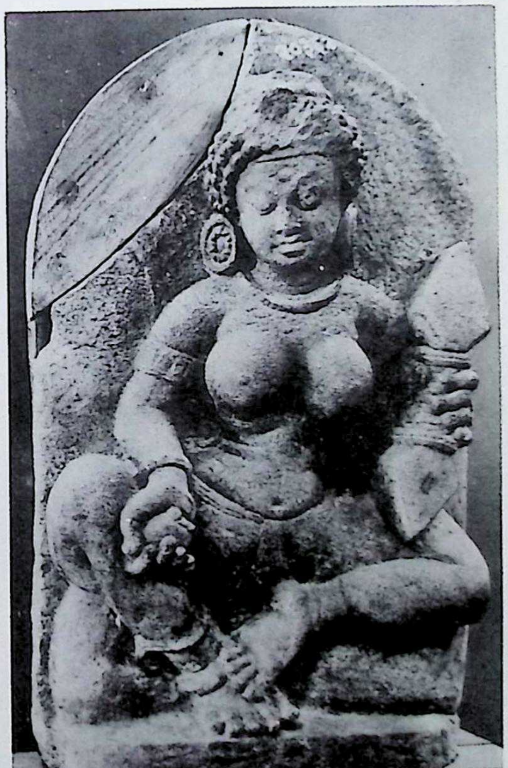
Pl. 53 *Brahmāṇī*, Mundesvari, (Rohtas, Bihar).



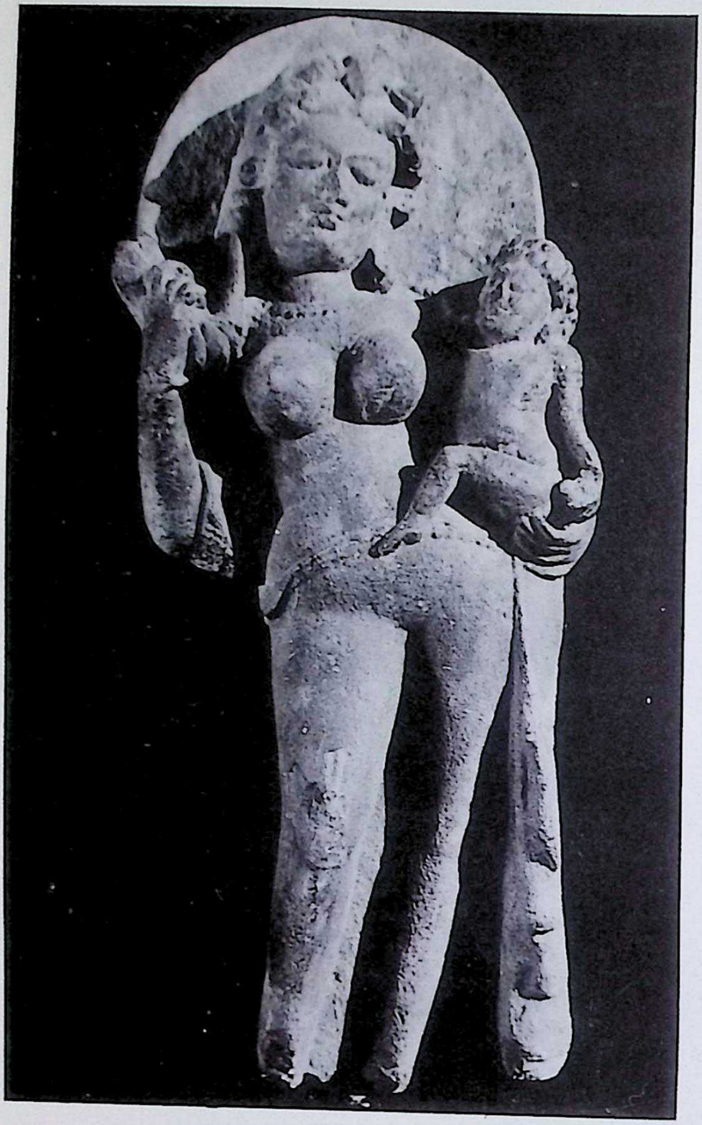
Pl. 54 *Mahesvari,* Mundesvari,
(Rohtas, Bihar).



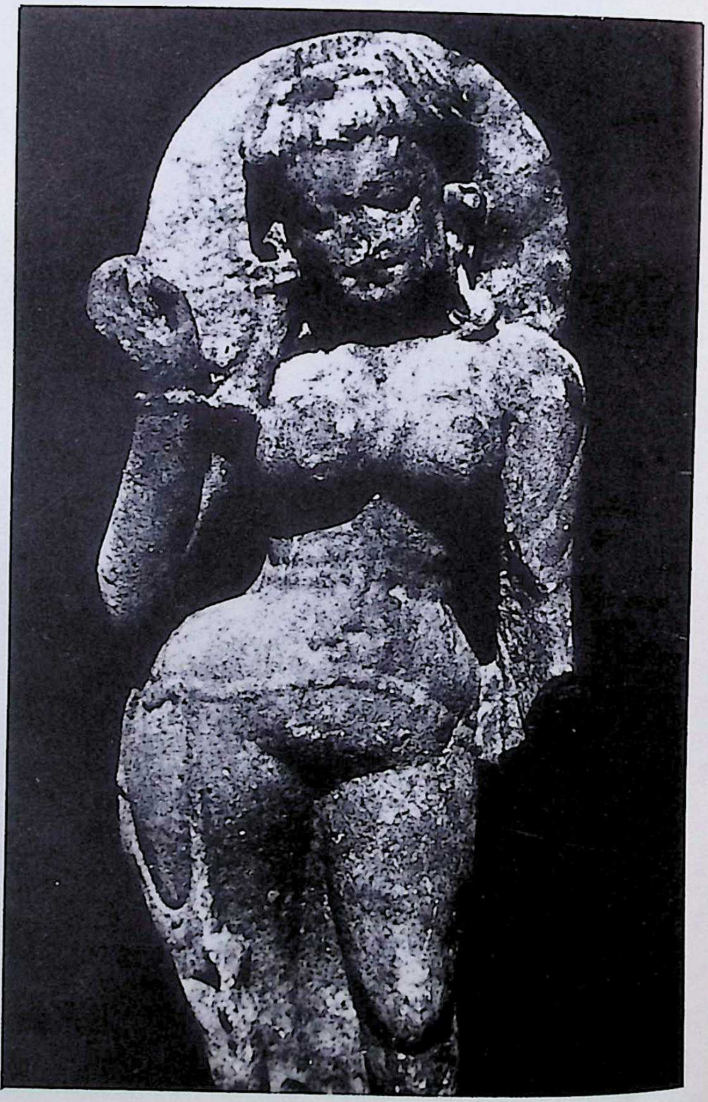
Pl. 55 *Aindri*, Mundesvari,
(Rohtas, Bihar).



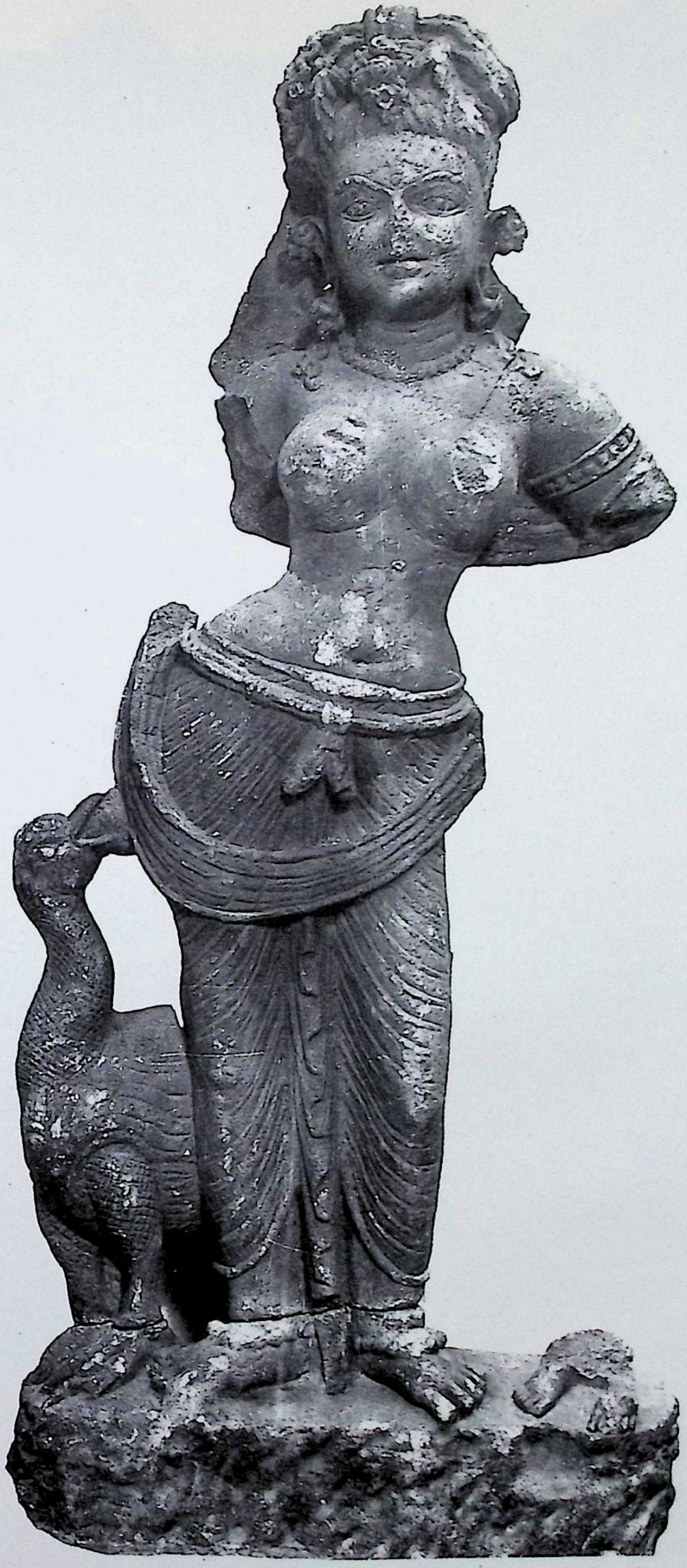
Pl. 56 *Aindri*, Amanva (Shahabad, Bihar).



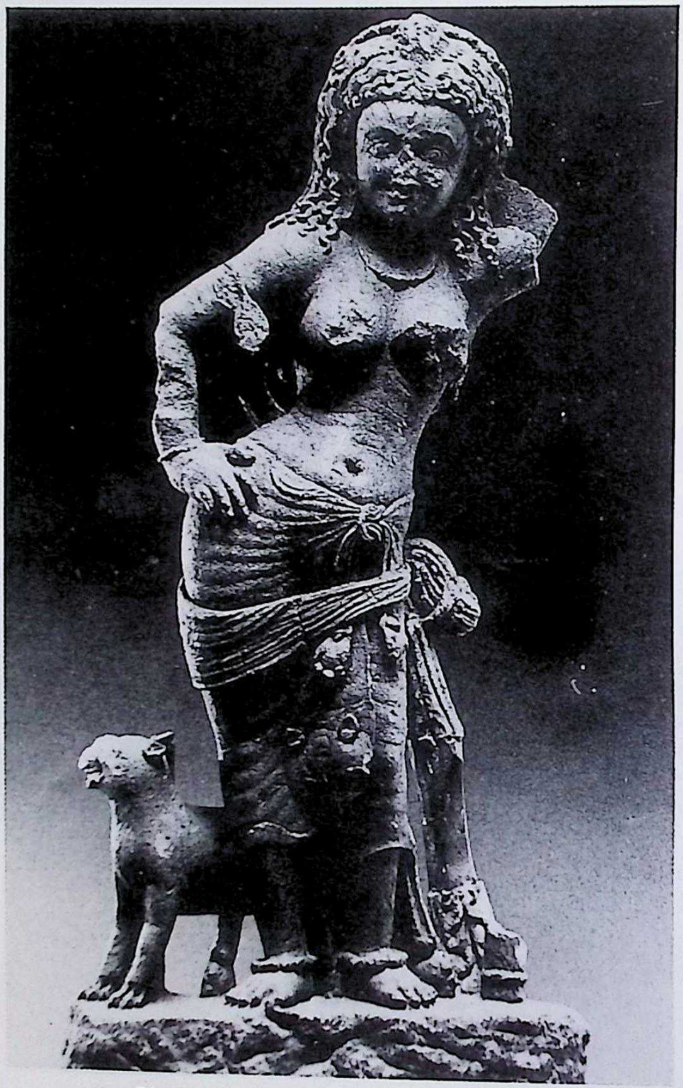
Pl. 57 *Aindri*, Jagat, (Udaipur, Rajasthan).



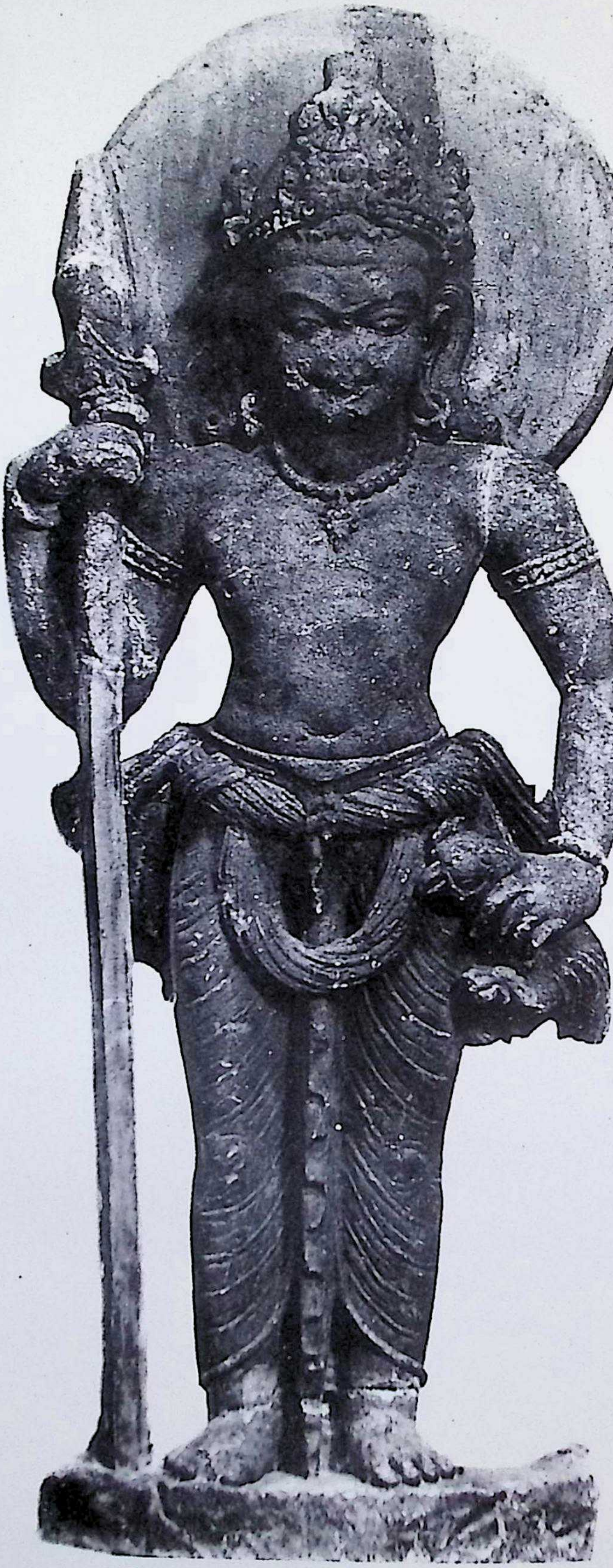
Pl. 58 *Brahmāṇī*, Jagat, (Udaipur, Rajasthan).



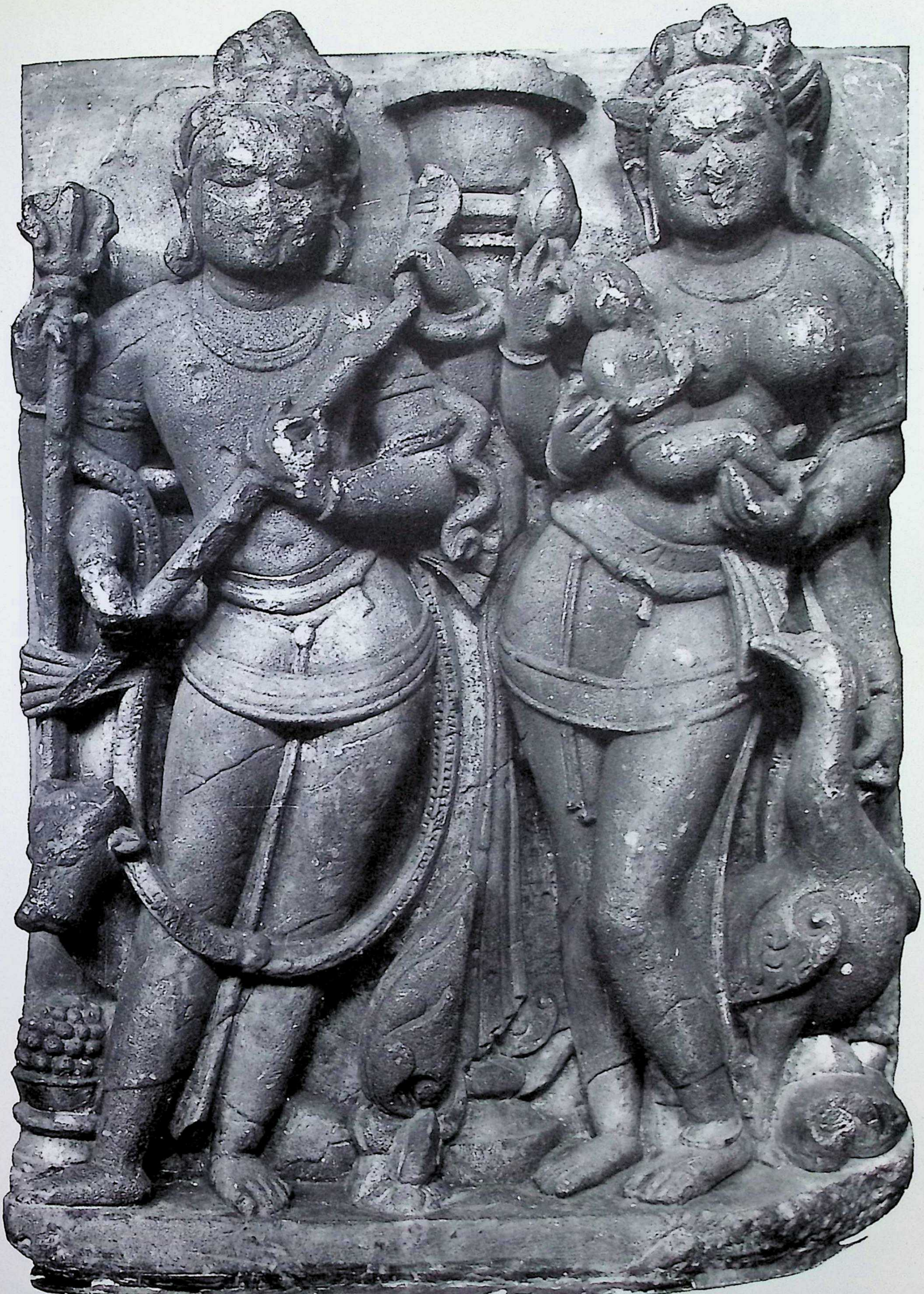
Pl. 59 *Brahmāṇī*, Samalaji, (group-B), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



Pl. 60 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Samalaji, (group-B), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).

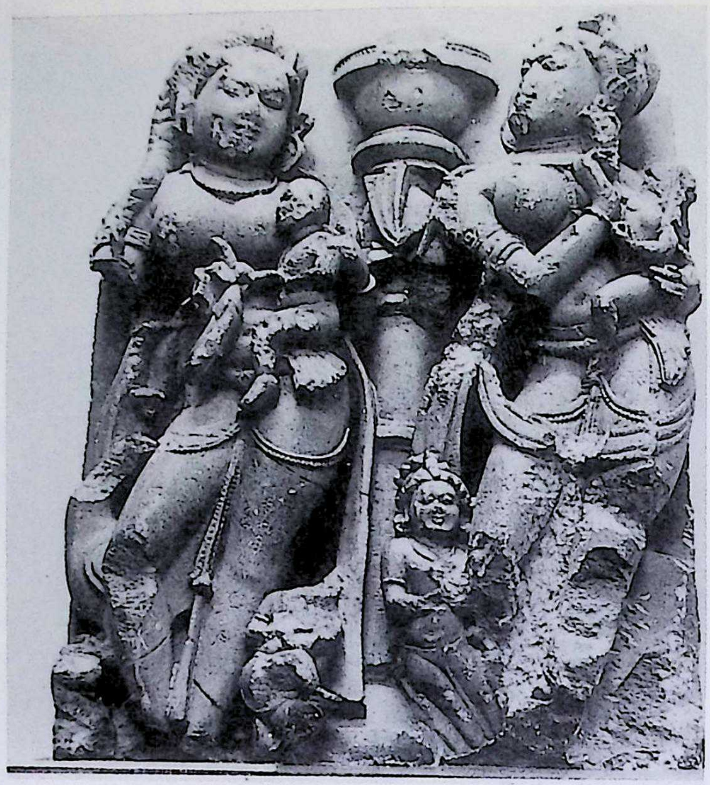


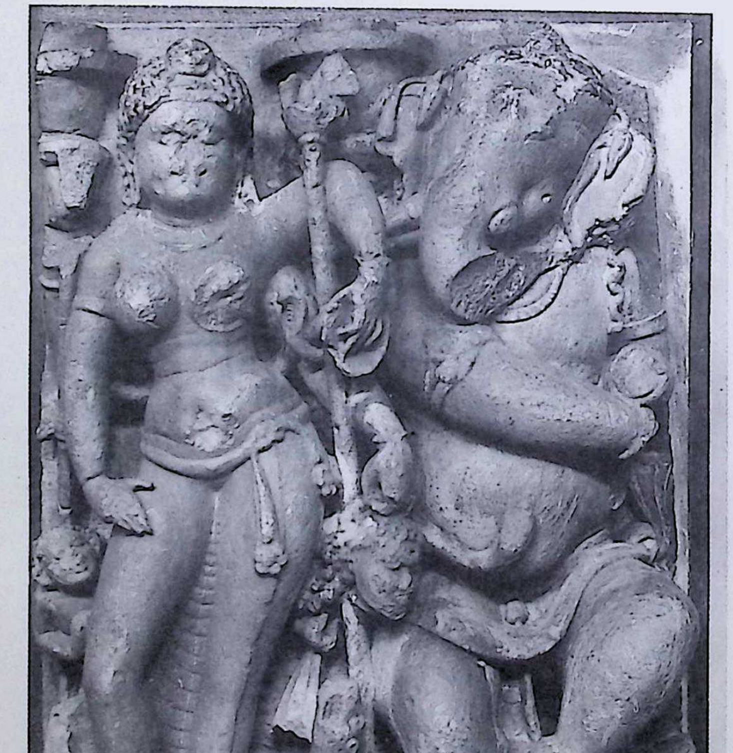
Pl. 61 *Skanda*, Samalaji, (group-B), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat).



Pl. 62 *Śiva and Brahmāṇī*, Tintoi, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).

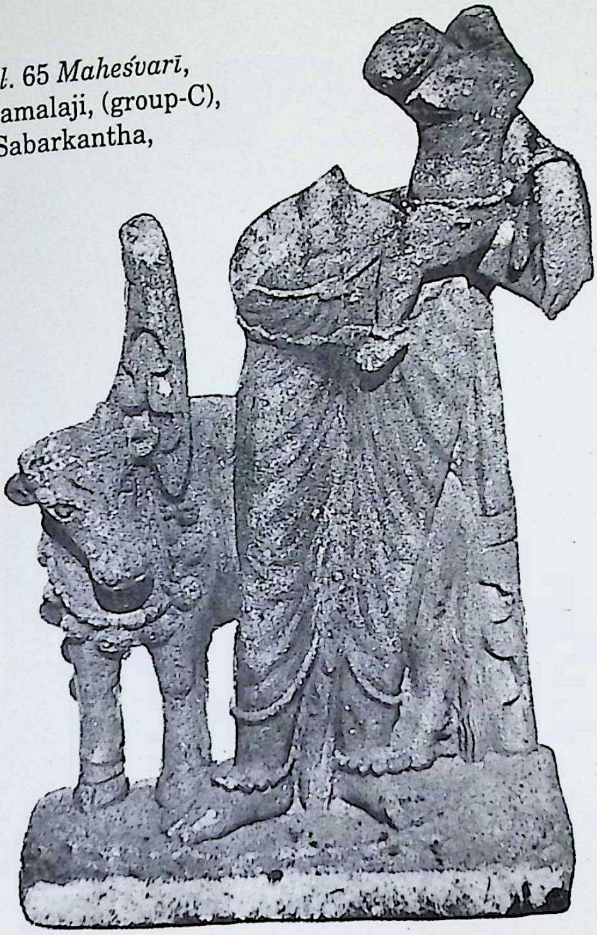
Pl. 63 *Vaiṣṇavī and Kaumāri*, Tintoi, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



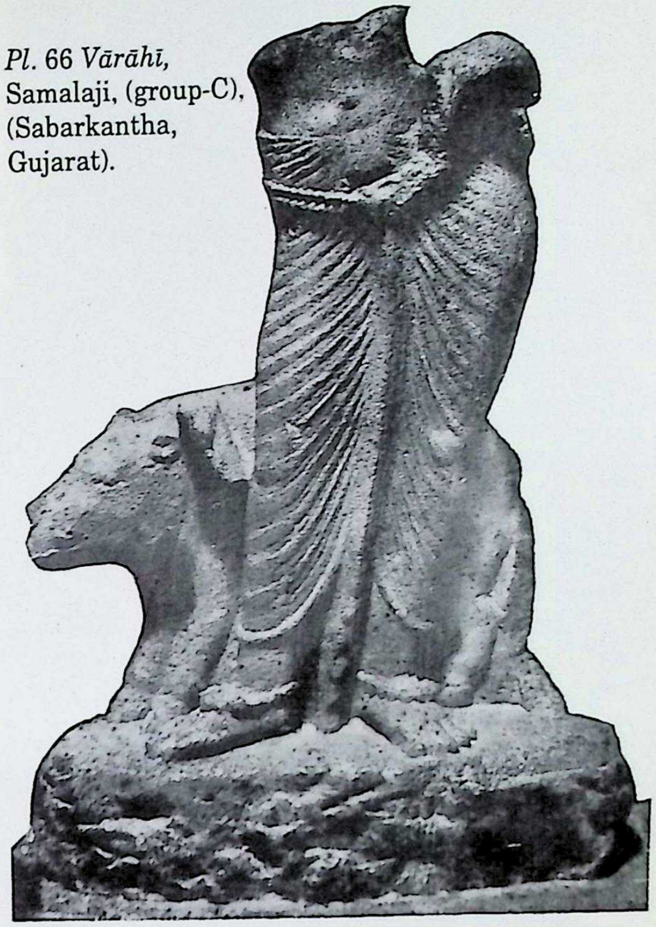

Ac 2.538.
PĀRVATI-GANESHA

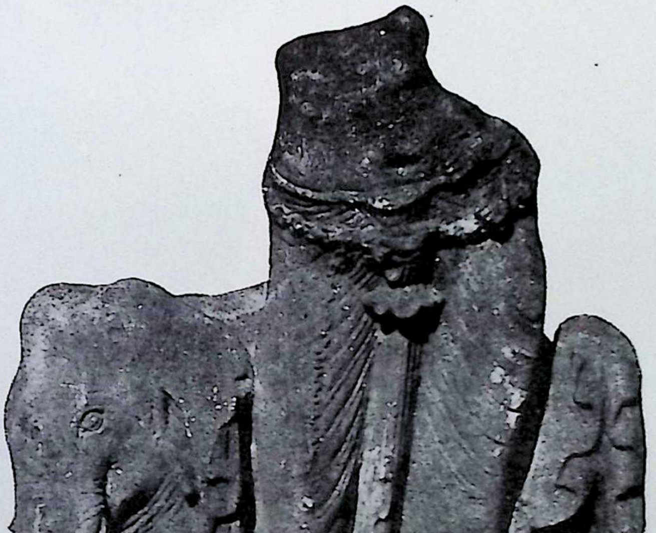
Pl. 64 *Cāmuṇḍā and Gaṇeśa*, Tintoi, (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).

Pl. 65 *Maheśvarī*,
Samalaji, (group-C),
(Sabarkantha,

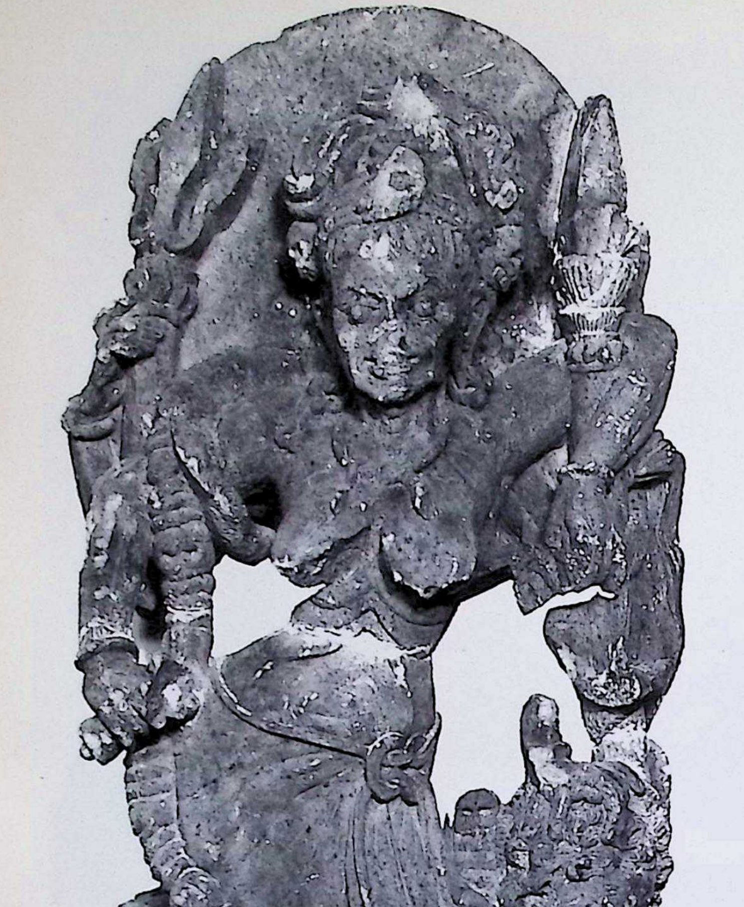


Pl. 66 *Vārāhī*,
Samalaji, (group-C),
(Sabarkantha,
Gujarat).

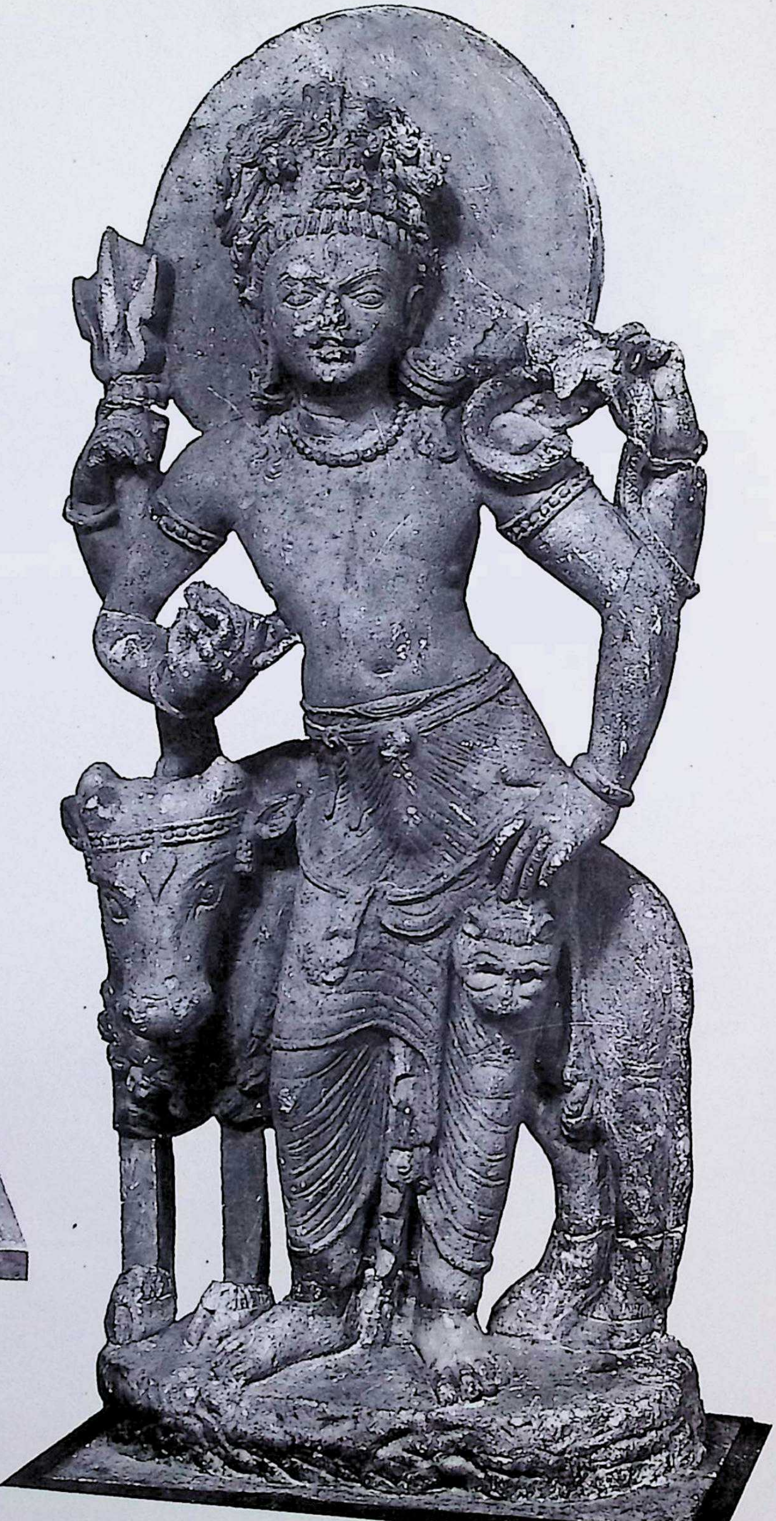




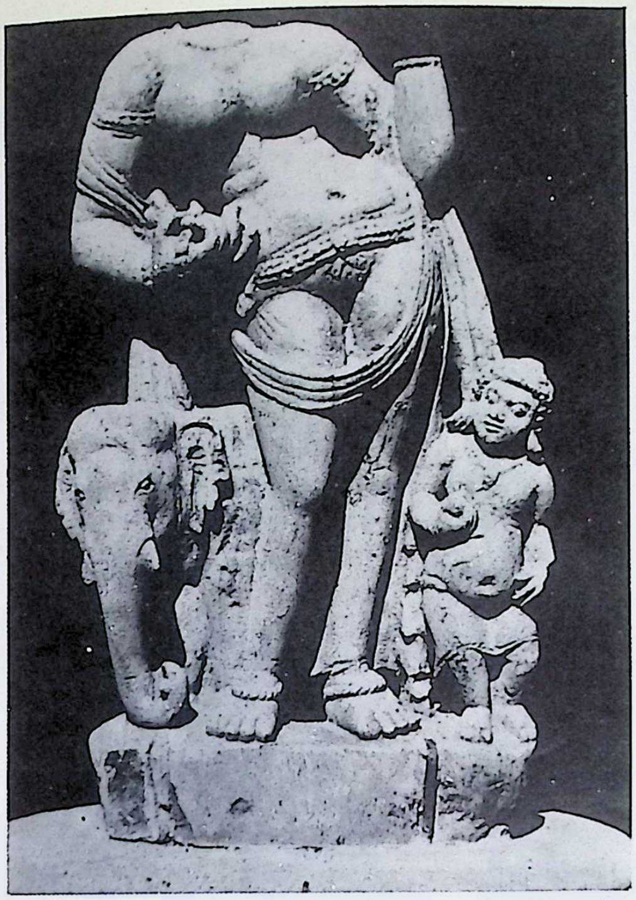
Pl. 67 *Aindri*, Samalaji (group-C), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



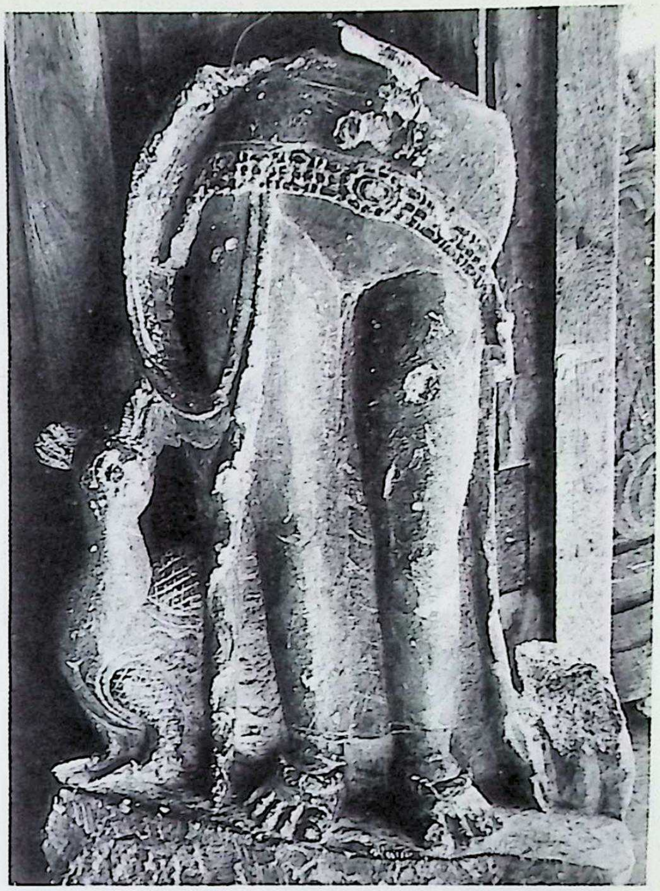
Pl. 68 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Samalaji (group-C), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat).



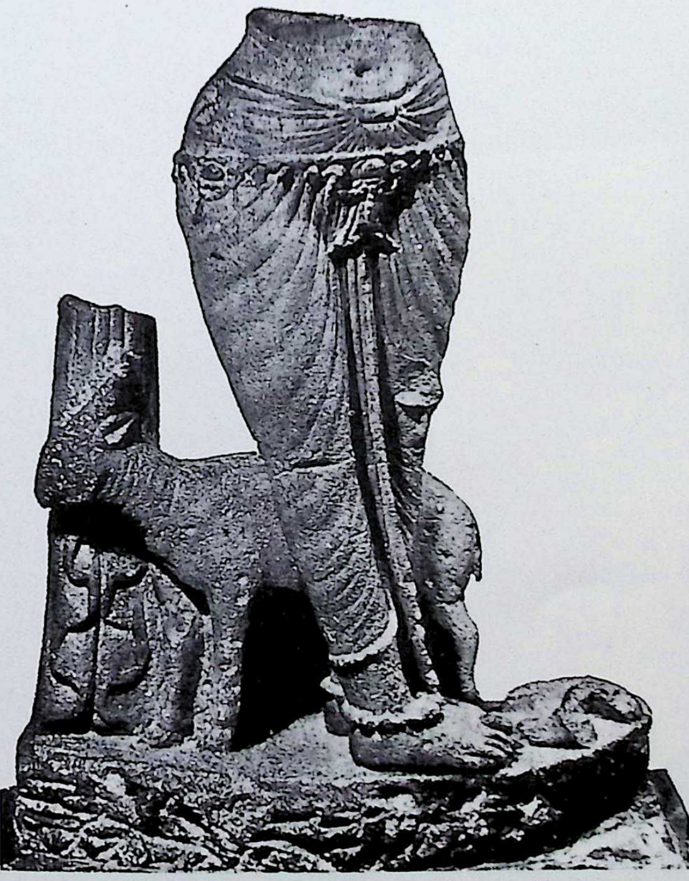
Pl. 69 *Śiva*, Samalaji, (group-C), (Sabarkantha,Gujarat).



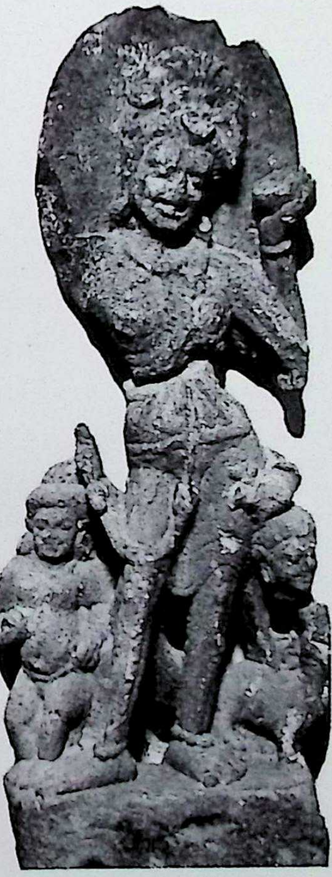
Pl. 70 *Aindri*, Dungarpur, (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).



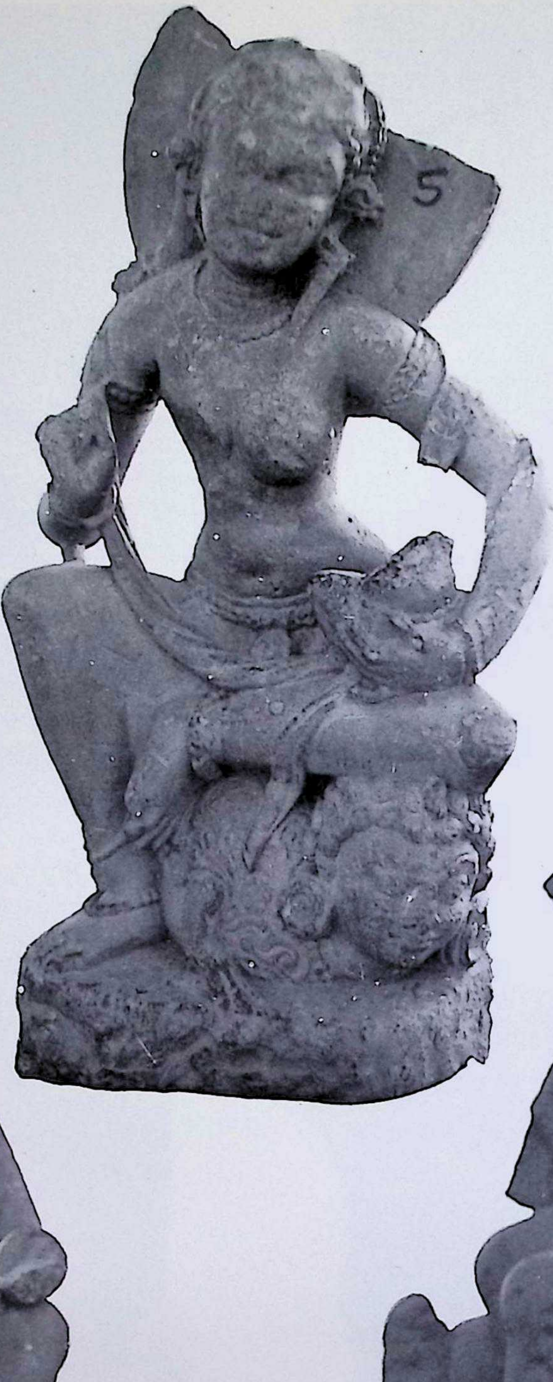
Pl. 71 *Kaumāri*, Amjhara, (group-A), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).



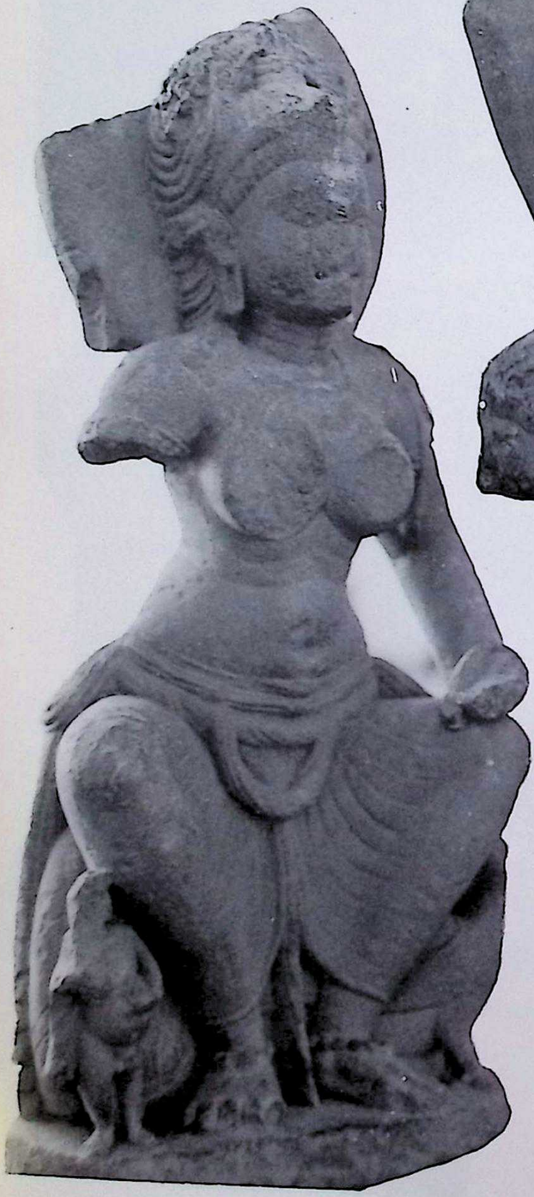
Pl. 72 *Vāyavī* (?), Samalaji (group-C), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).



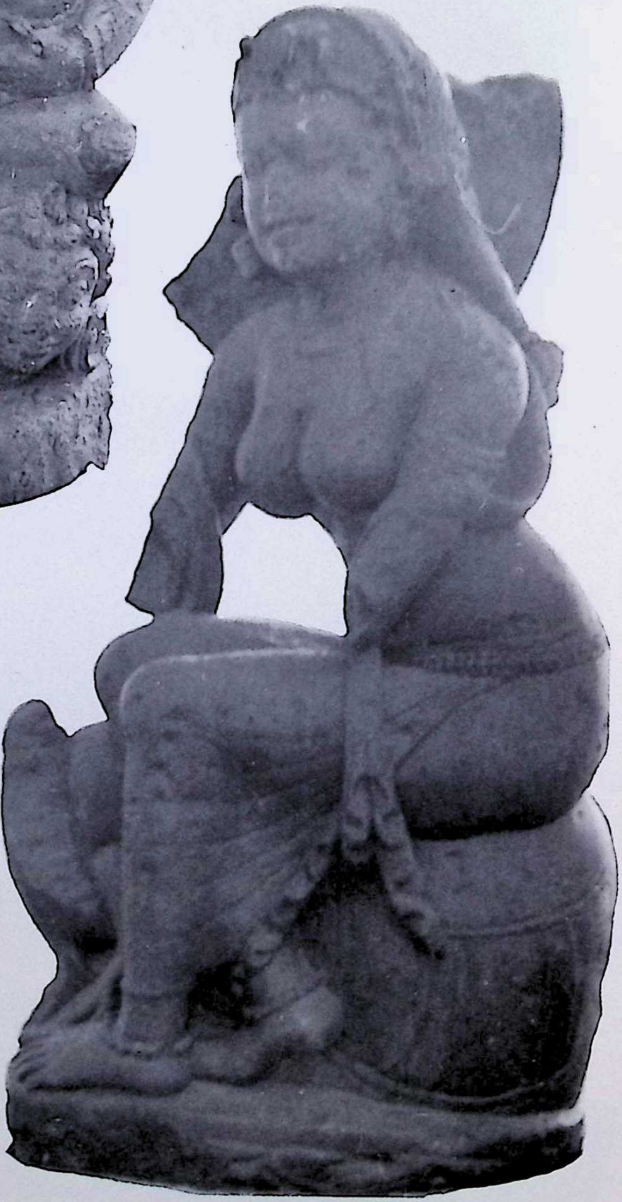
Pl. 73 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Amjhara, (group-A), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).



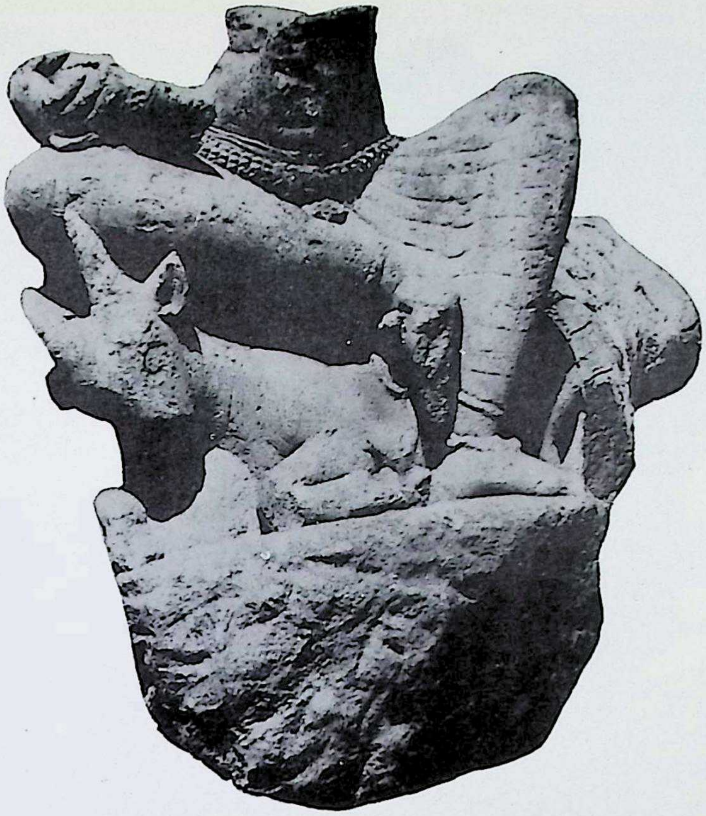
Pl. 74 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).



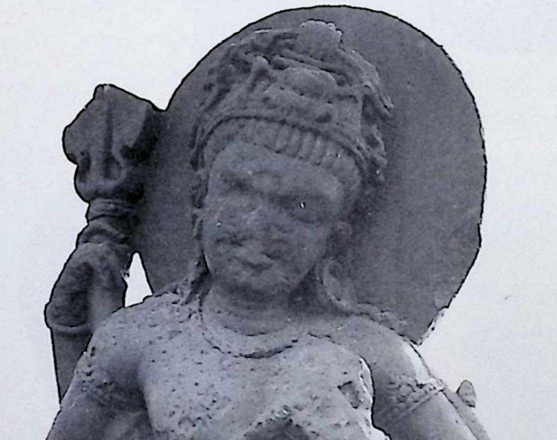
Pl. 75 *Brahmāṇī*, Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).



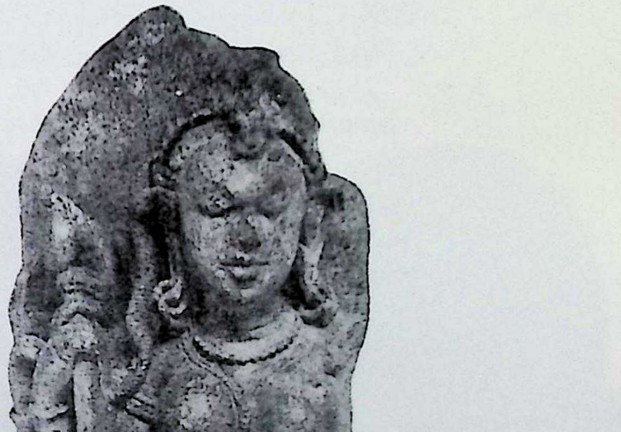
Pl. 76 *Kaumāri*, Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).



Pl. 77 *Vāyavī* (?), Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).

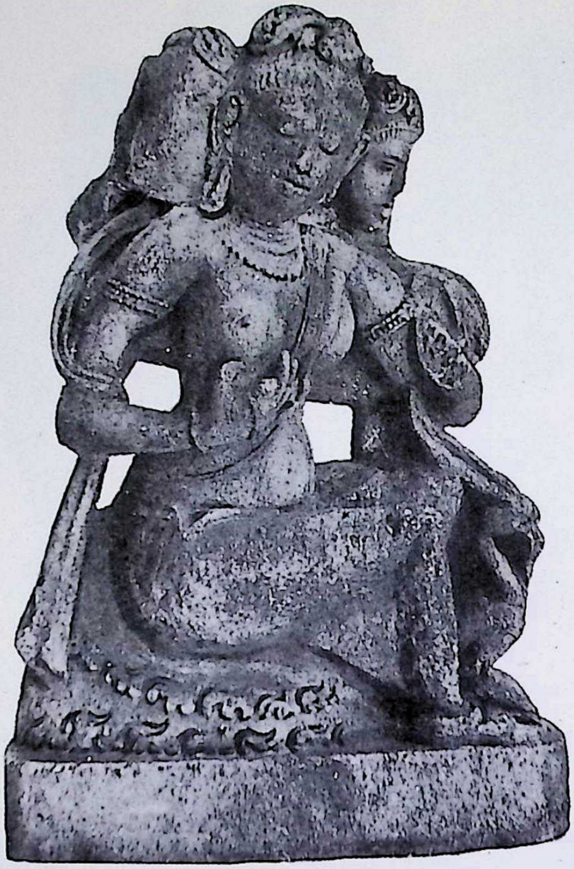


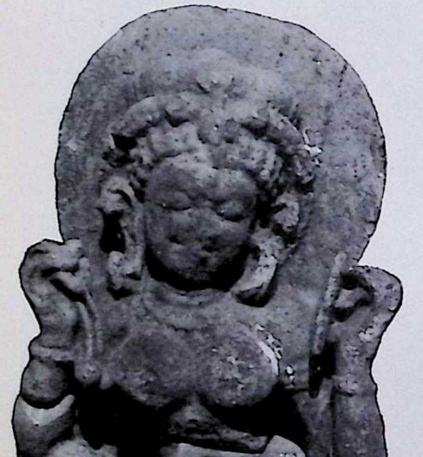
Pl. 78 *Vīṇādhara Śiva*, Amjhara, (group-B), (Dungarpur, Rajasthan).



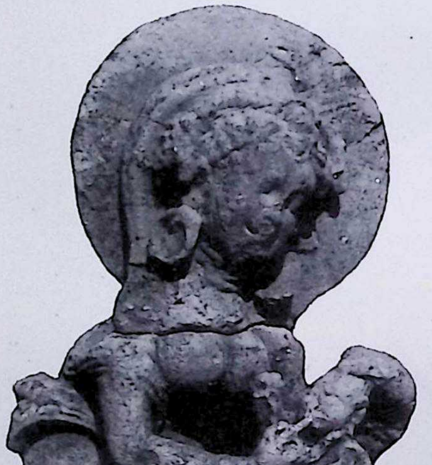
Pl. 79 *Kaumārī*, Samalaji, (group-D), (Sabarkantha, Gujarat).

Pl. 80 *Brahmāṇī*,
Samalaji, (group-D),
(Sabarkantha,
Gujarat).

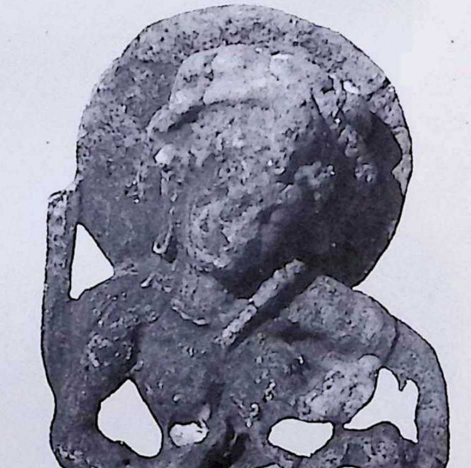




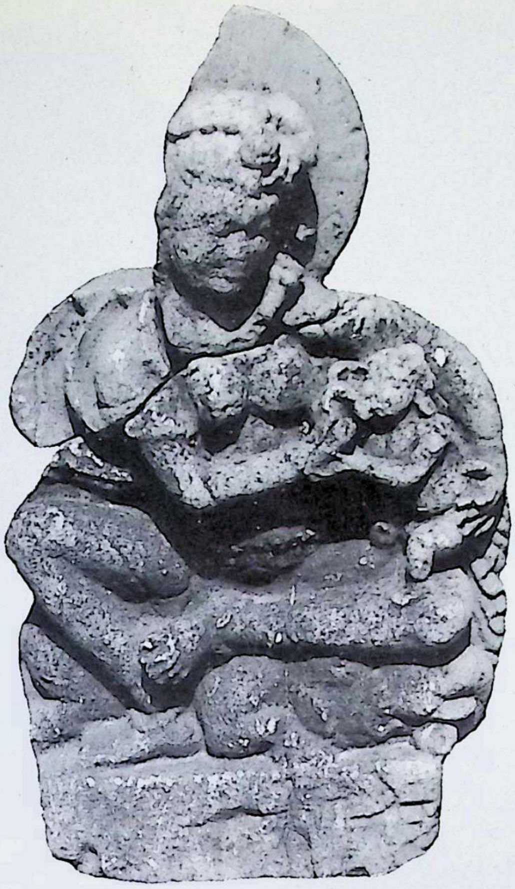
Pl. 81 *Maheśvarī*, Mataria,
(Panchamahal, Gujarat).



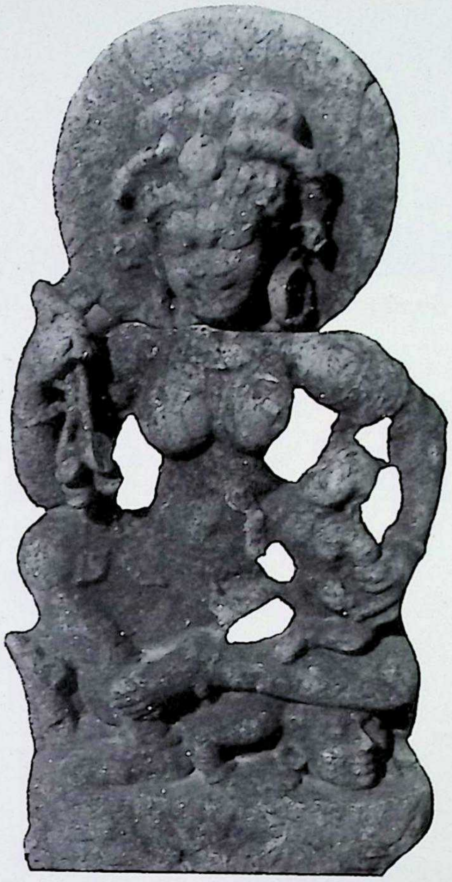
Pl. 82 *Kaumāri*, Mataria,
(Panchamahal, Gujarat).



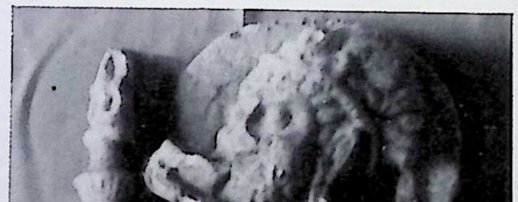
Pl. 83 *Vārāhī*, Mataria,
(Panchamahal, Gujarat).



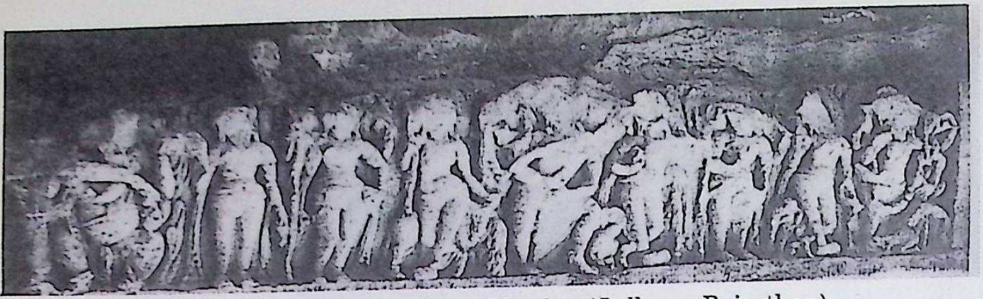
Pl. 84 *Aindri*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat).



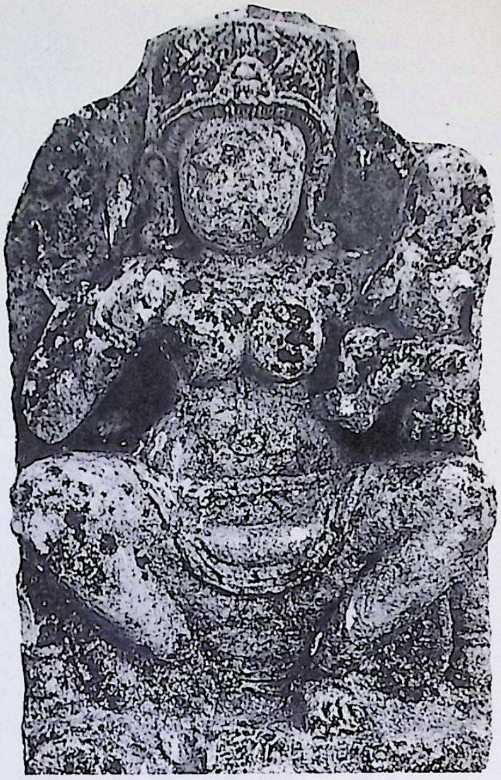
Pl. 85 *Ambikā*(?) or *Cāmuṇḍā*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat).



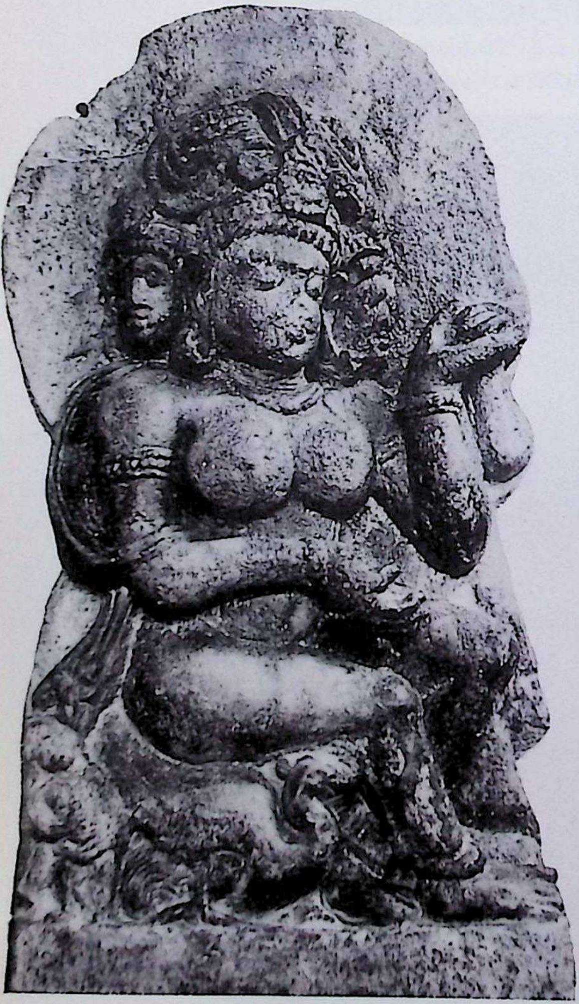
Pl. 86 *Kāla Bhairava*, Mataria, (Panchamahal, Gujarat).



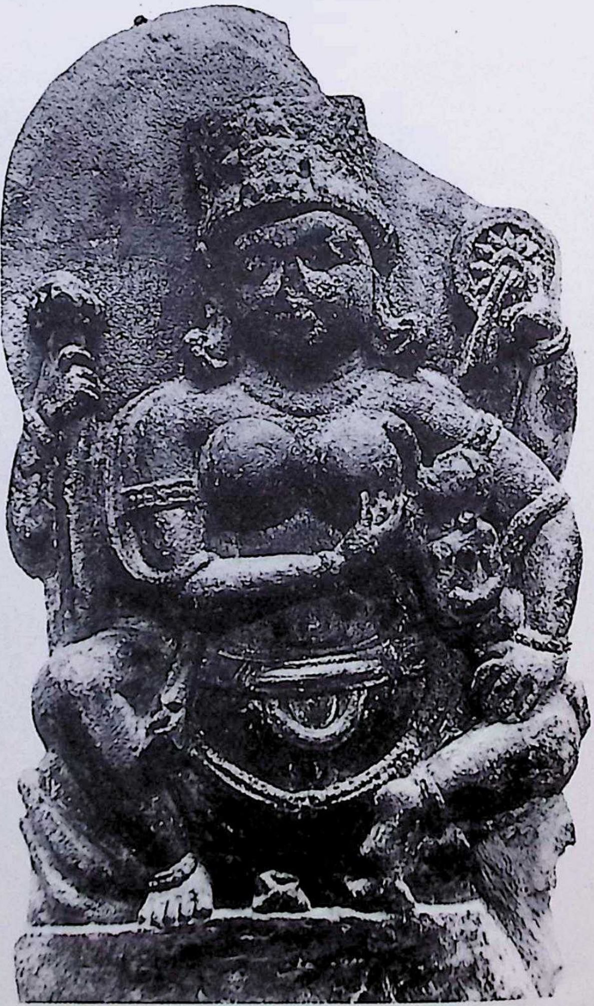
Pl. 87 *Saptamātṛkā*, rock-cut, Mandor, (Jodhpur, Rajasthan).



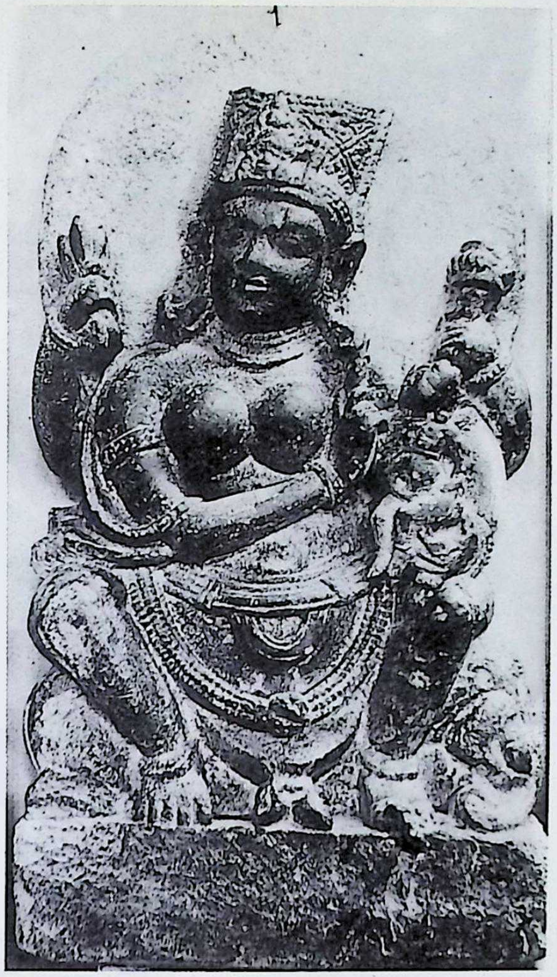
Pl. 88 *Aindri*, Dhank, (Junagadh, Gujarat).



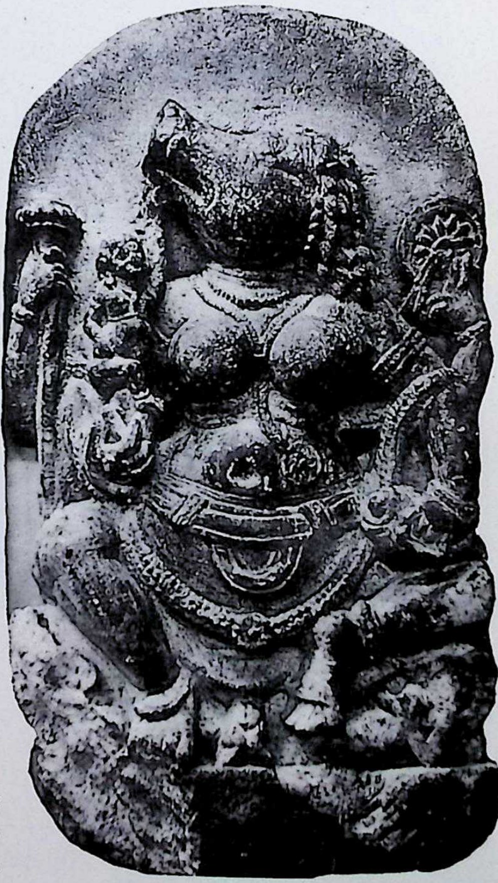
Pl. 89 *Brahmāṇī*, Kotesvar, (North Gujarat).



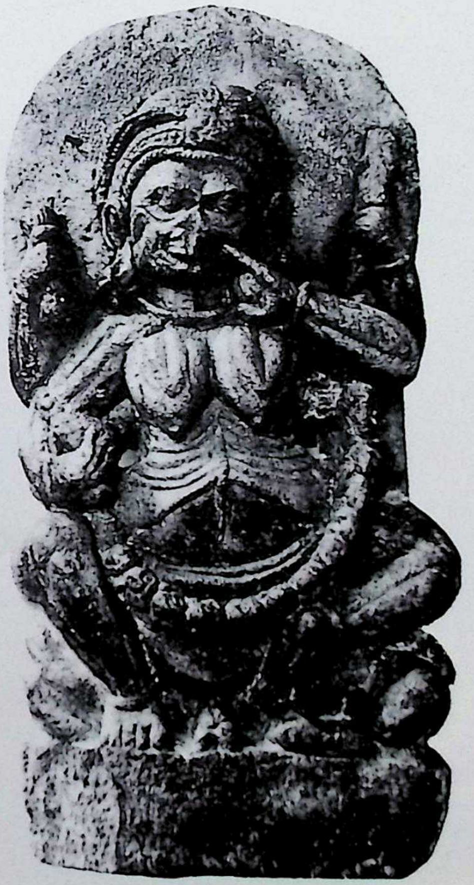
Pl. 90 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Kotesvar, (North Gujarat).



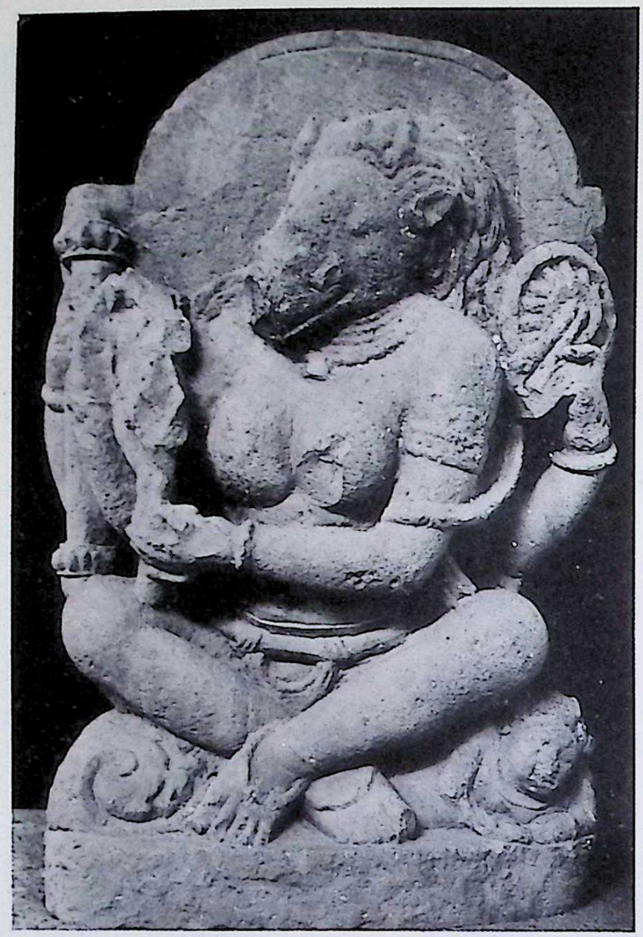
Pl. 91 *Aindri*,
Kotesvar,
(North Gujarat).



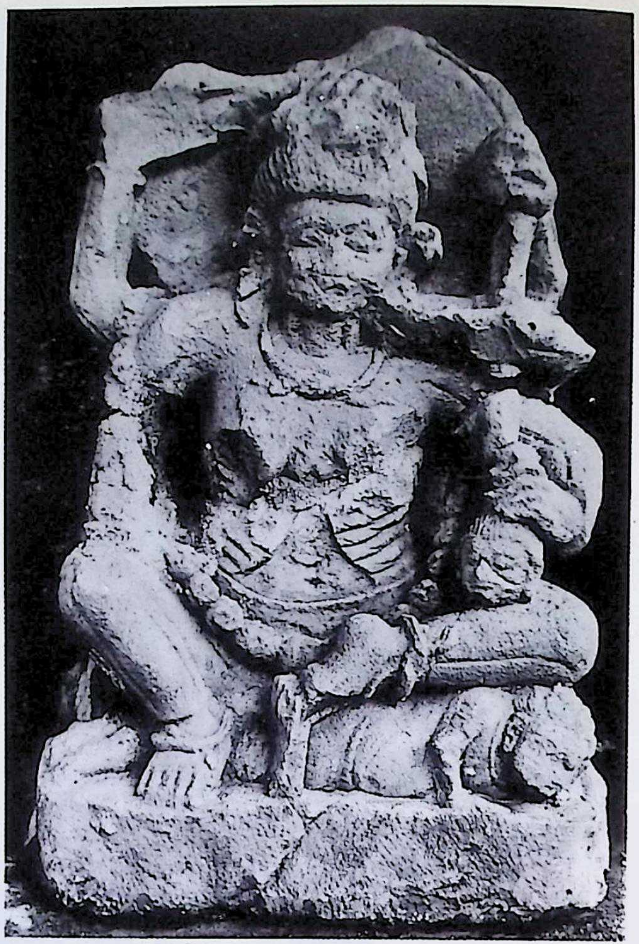
Pl. 92 *Vārāhī*,
Kotesvar,
(North Gujarat).



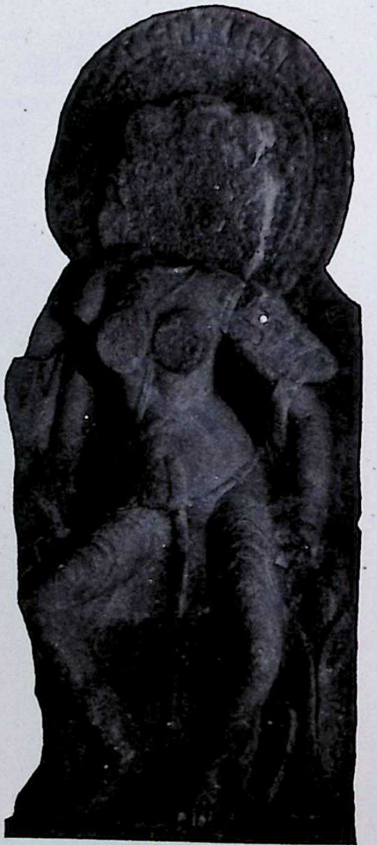
Pl. 93 *Cāmuṇḍā*,
Kotesvar,
(North Gujarat).



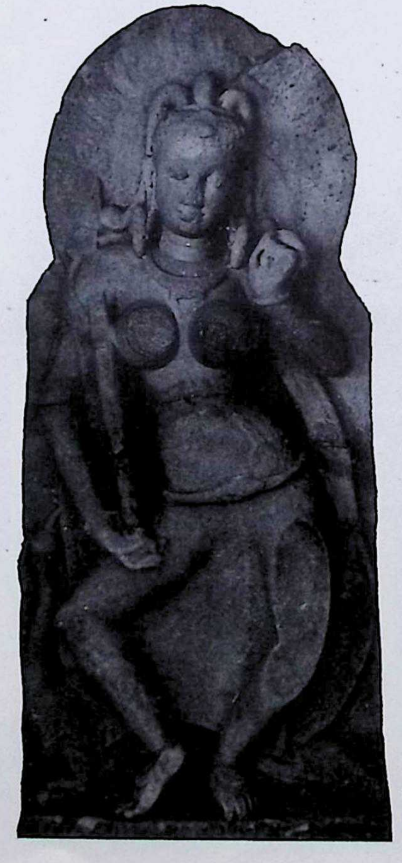
Pl. 94 *Vārāhī*, Mt. Abu, (Sirohi, Rajasthan).



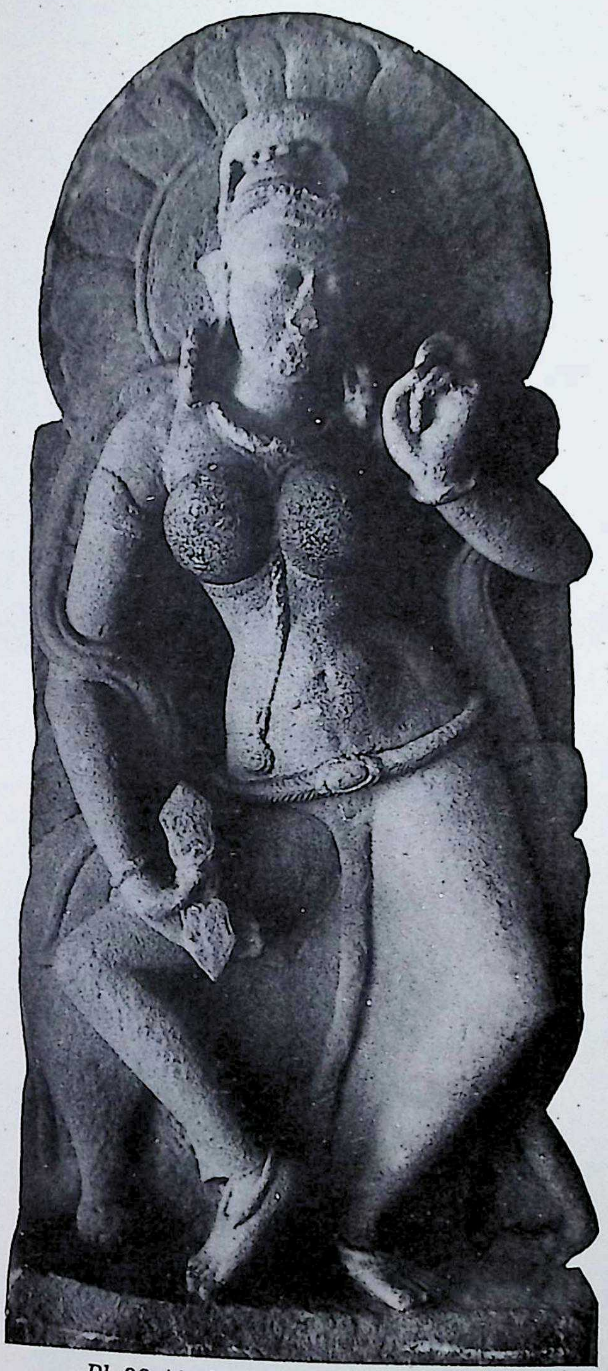
Pl. 95 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Mt. Abu, (Sirohi, Rajasthan).



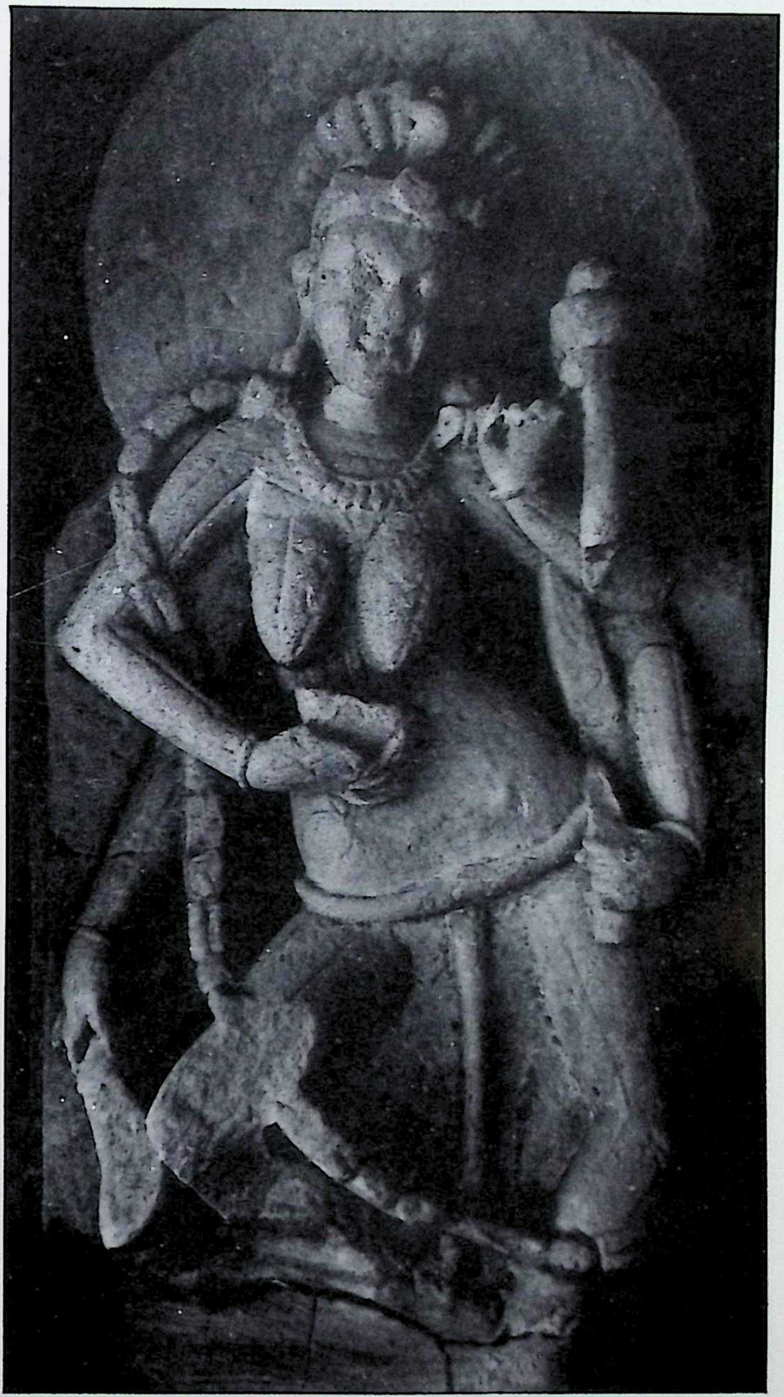
Pl. 96 *Brahmāṇī*, Kota, (Shivpuri, M.P.).



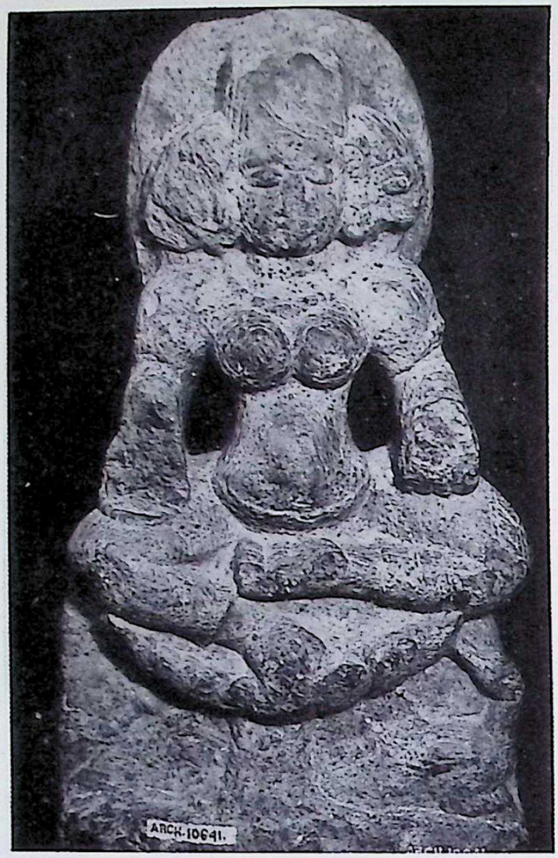
Pl. 97 *Kaumāri*, Kota (Shivpuri, M.P.).



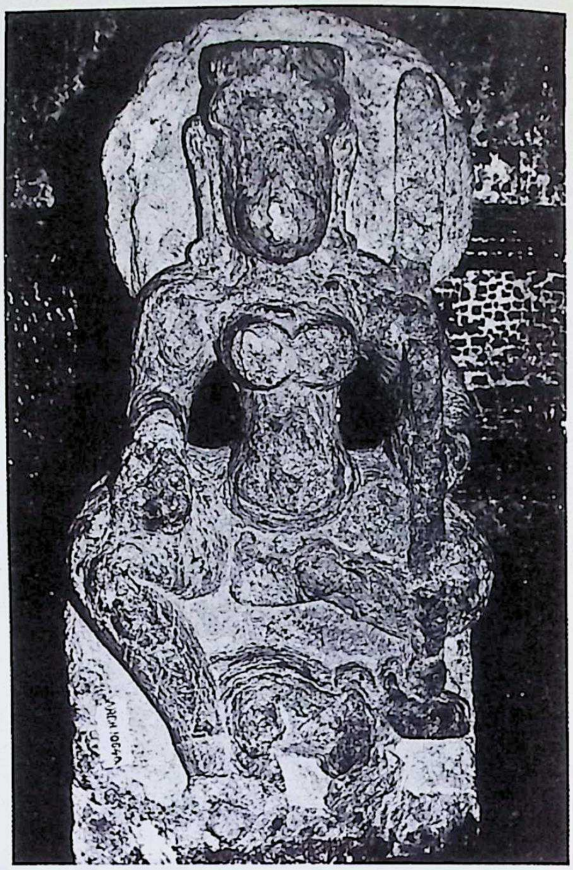
Pl. 98 *Aindri*, Kota (Shivpuri, M.P.).



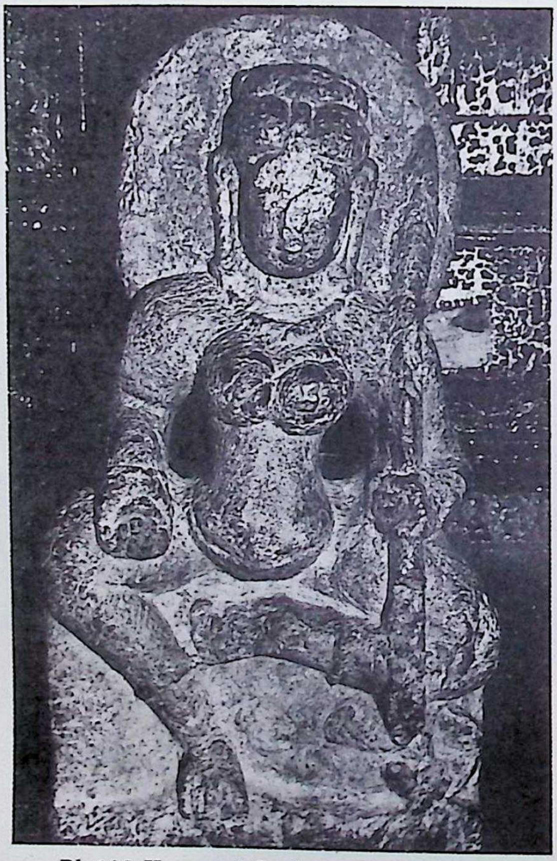
Pl. 99 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Kota, (Shivpuri, M.P.).



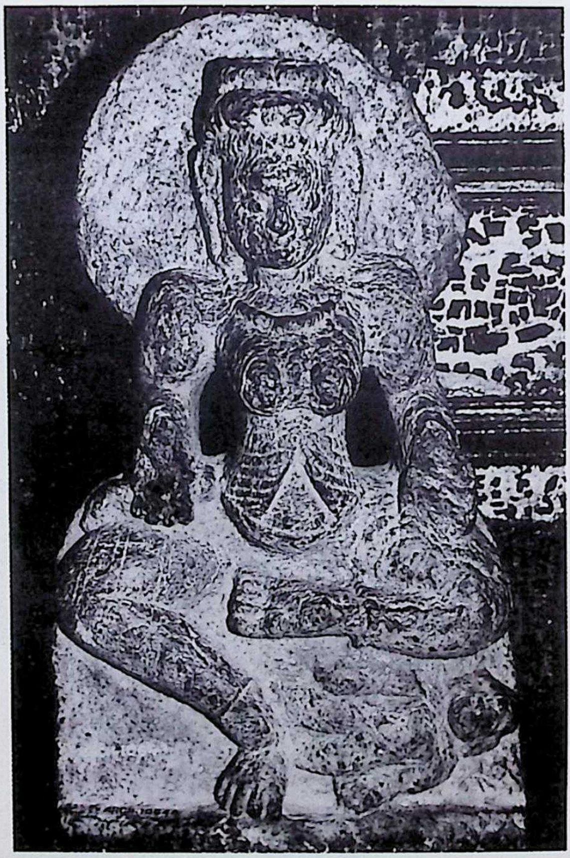
Pl. 100 *Brahmāṇi*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar).



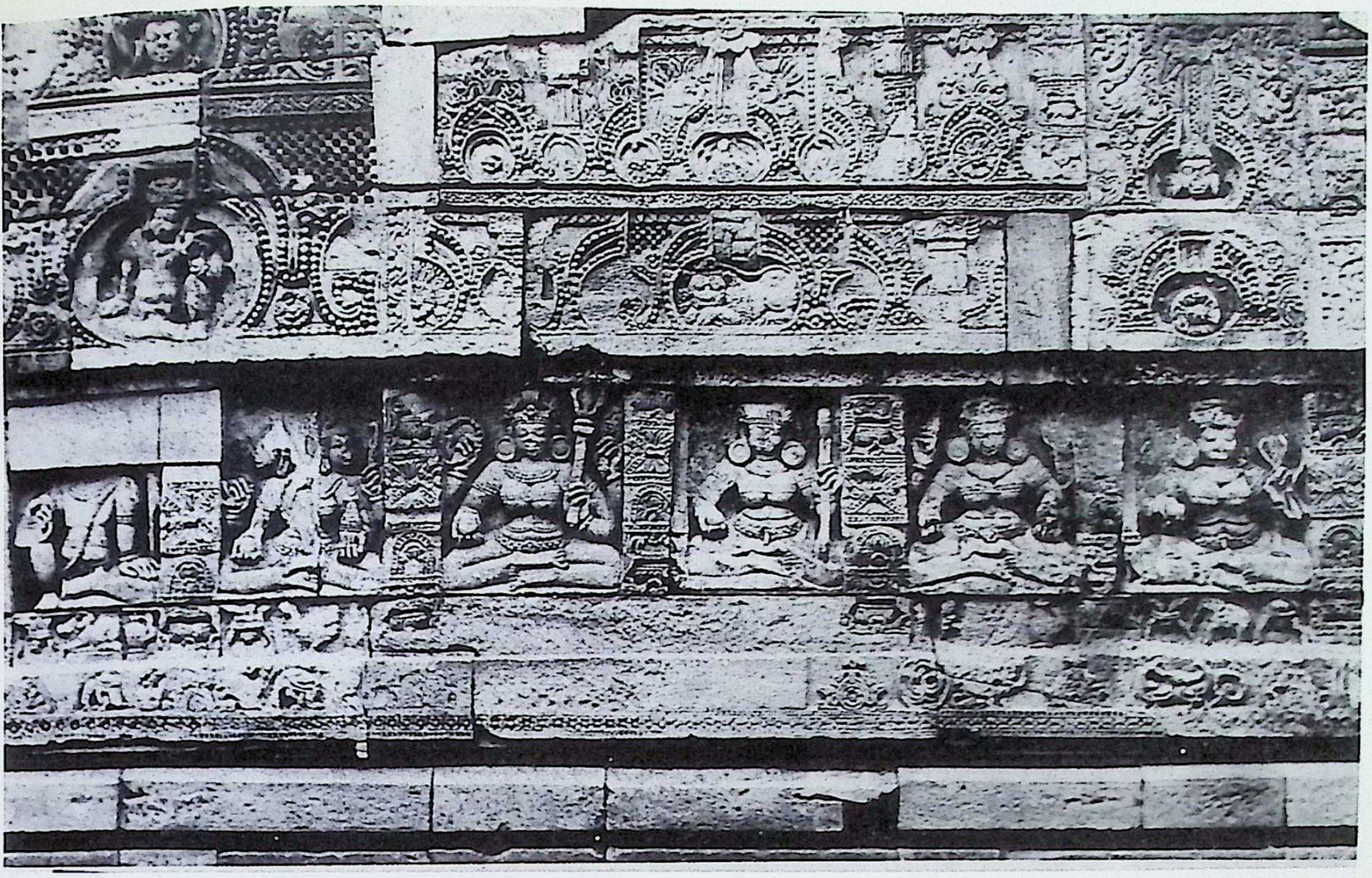
Pl. 101 *Maheśvarī*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar).



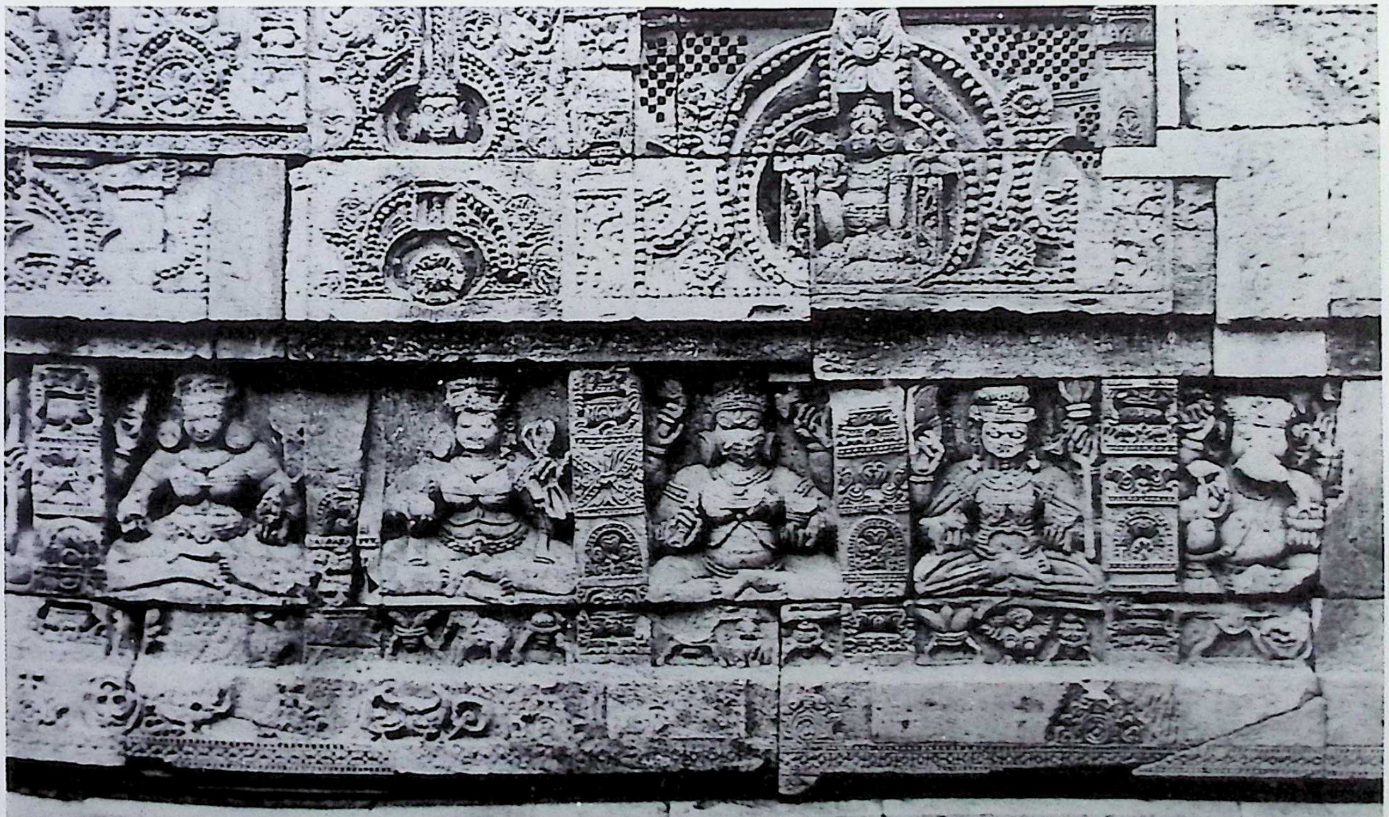
Pl. 102 *Kaumāri*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar).



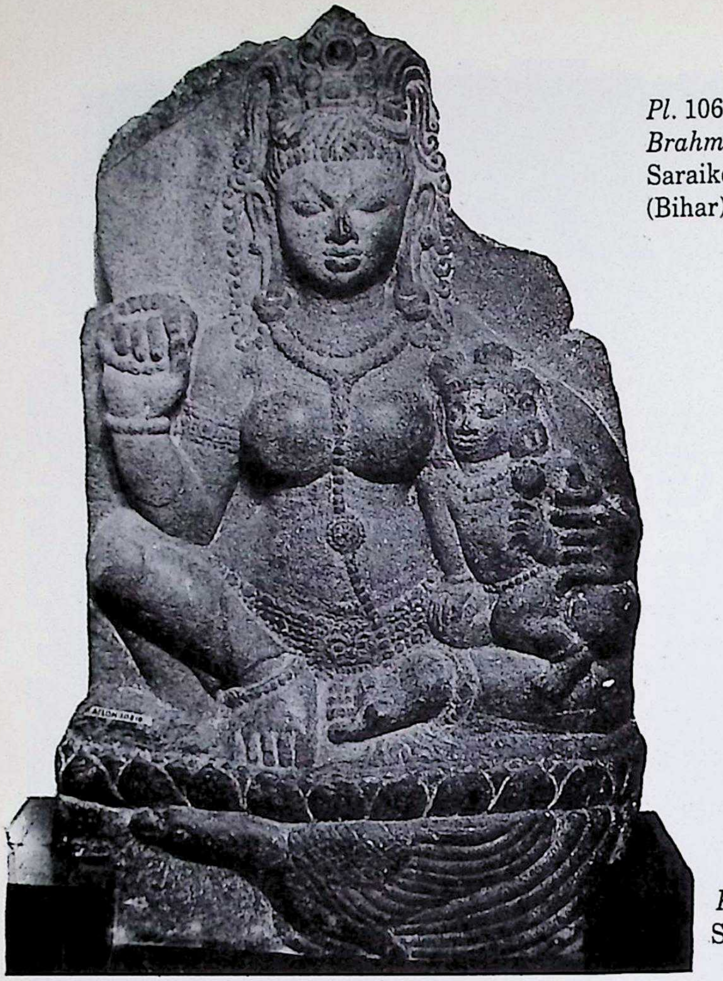
Pl. 103 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Pachar, (Gaya, Bihar).



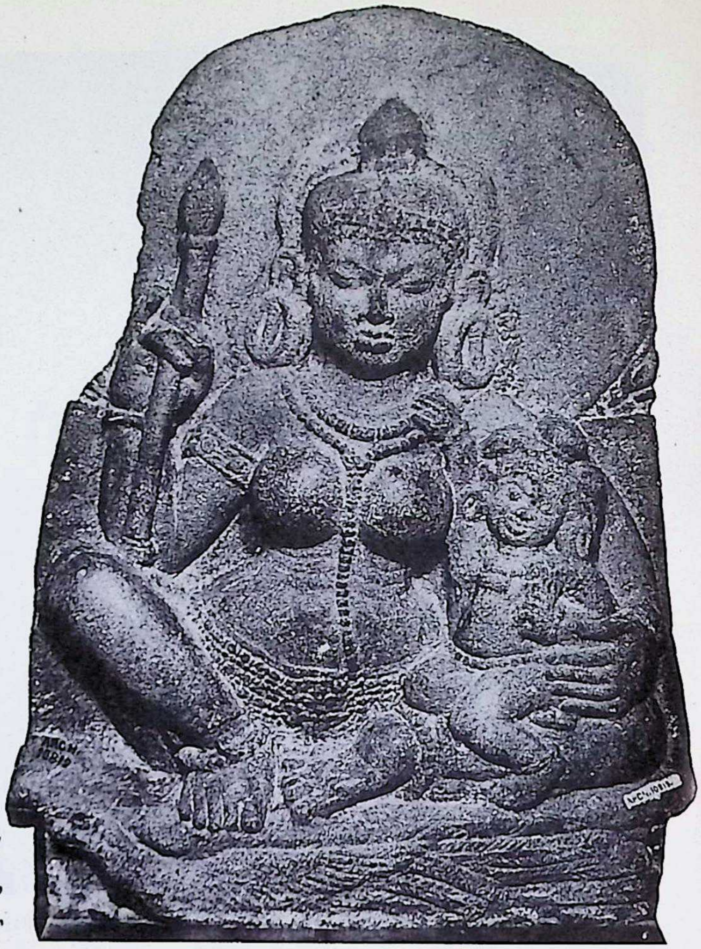
Pl. 104 *Saptamātṛkā group*, Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri,Orissa).



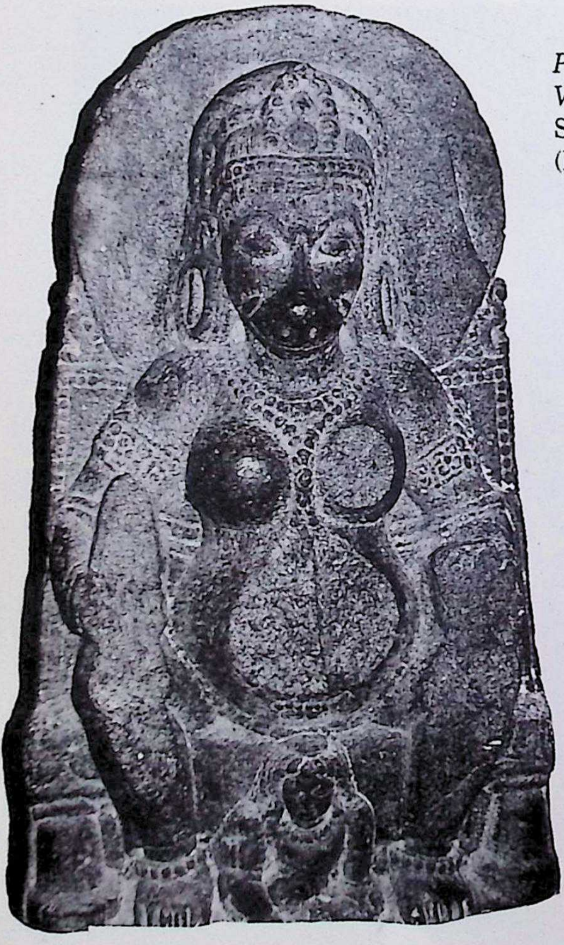
Pl. 105 *Saptamātṛkā group*, Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa).



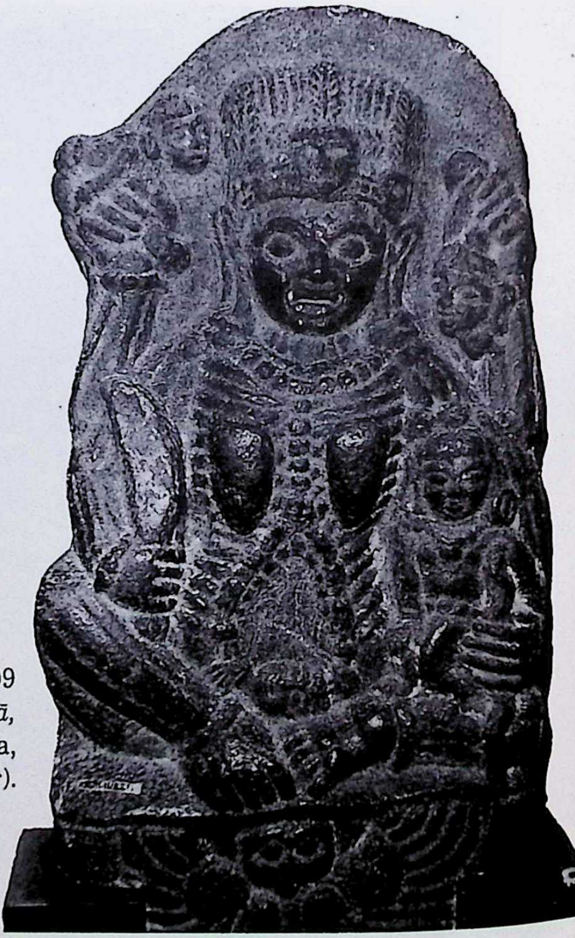
Pl. 106
Brahmāṇī,
Saraikela,
(Bihar).



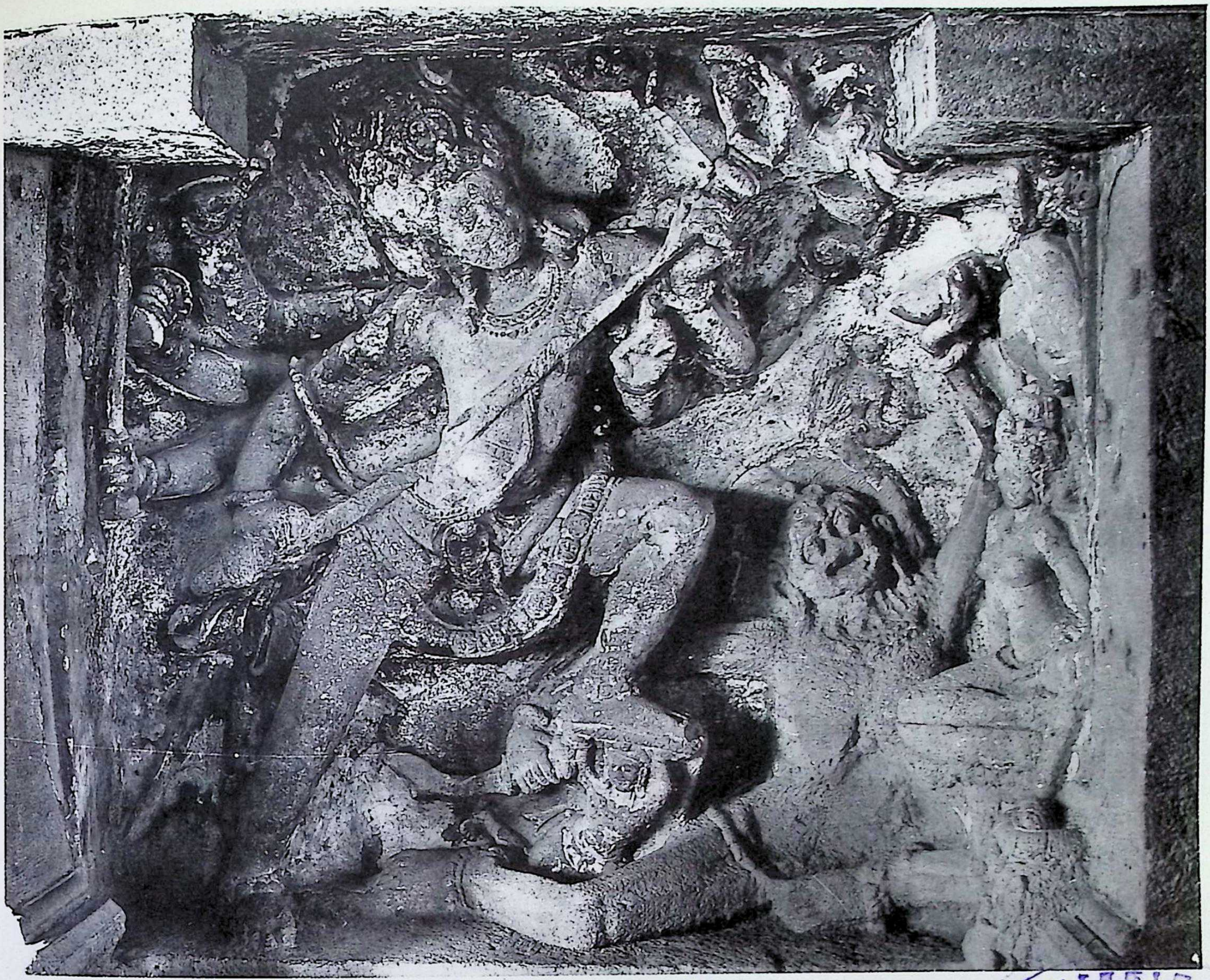
Pl. 107
Kaumāri,
Saraikela,
(Bihar).



Pl. 108
Vārāhī,
Saraikela,
(Bihar).

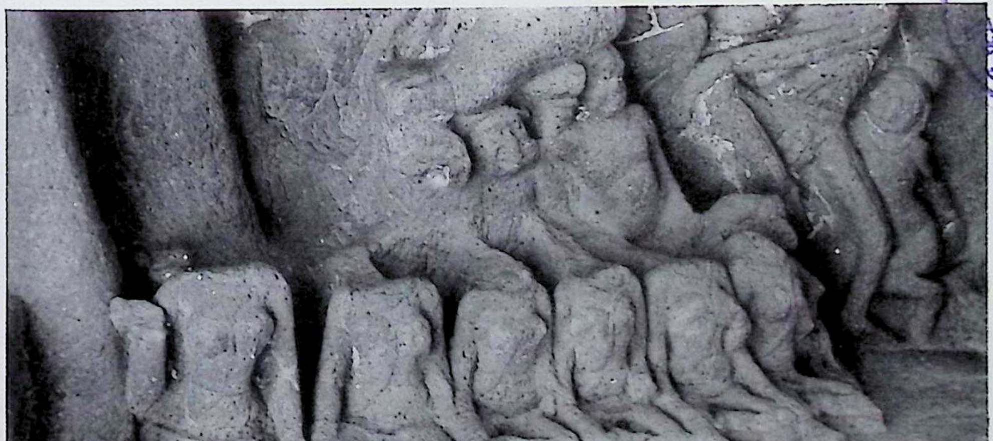


Pl. 109
Cāmuṇḍā,
Saraikela,
(Bihar).

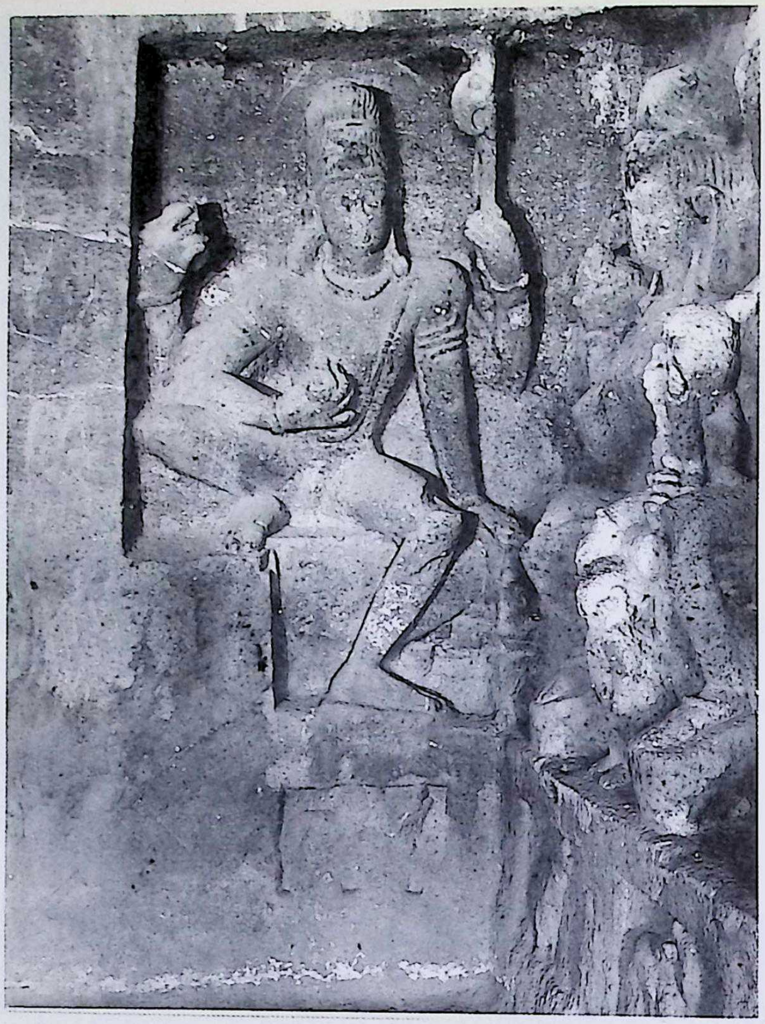


Pl. 110 *Andhakāsuravadha*, Cave-15, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).

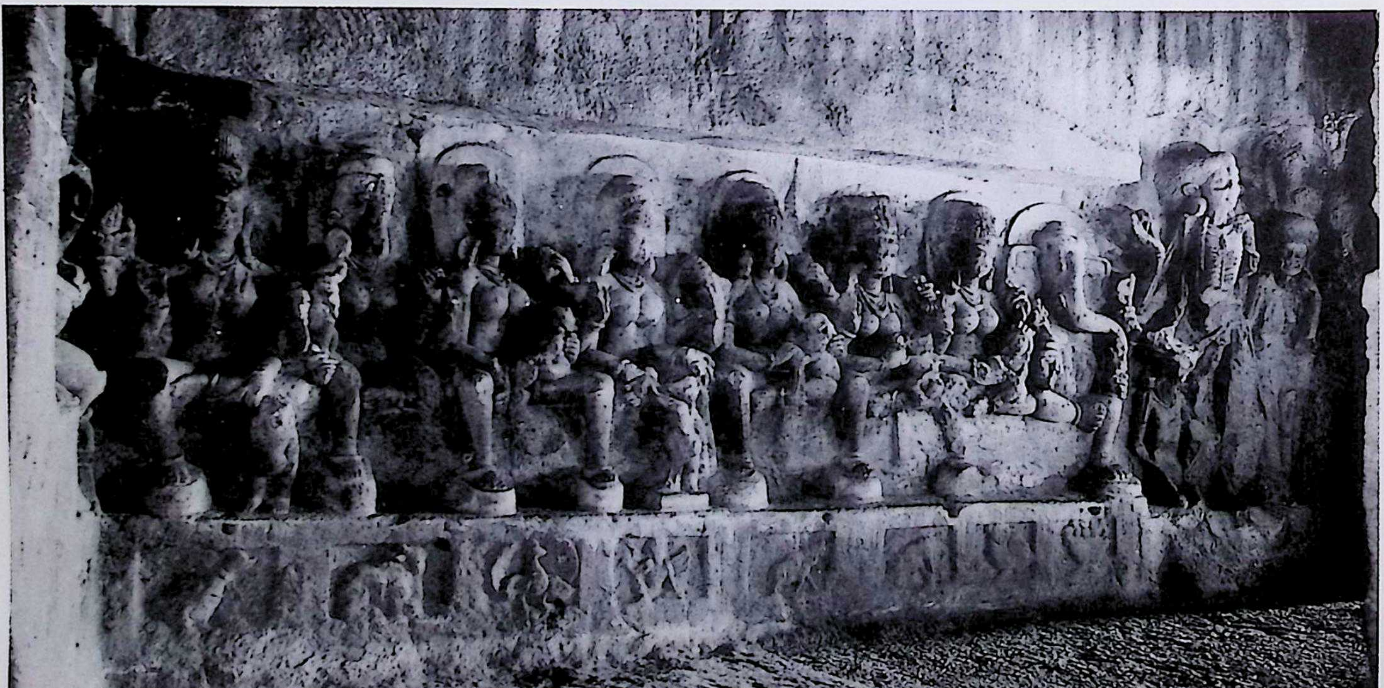
पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय



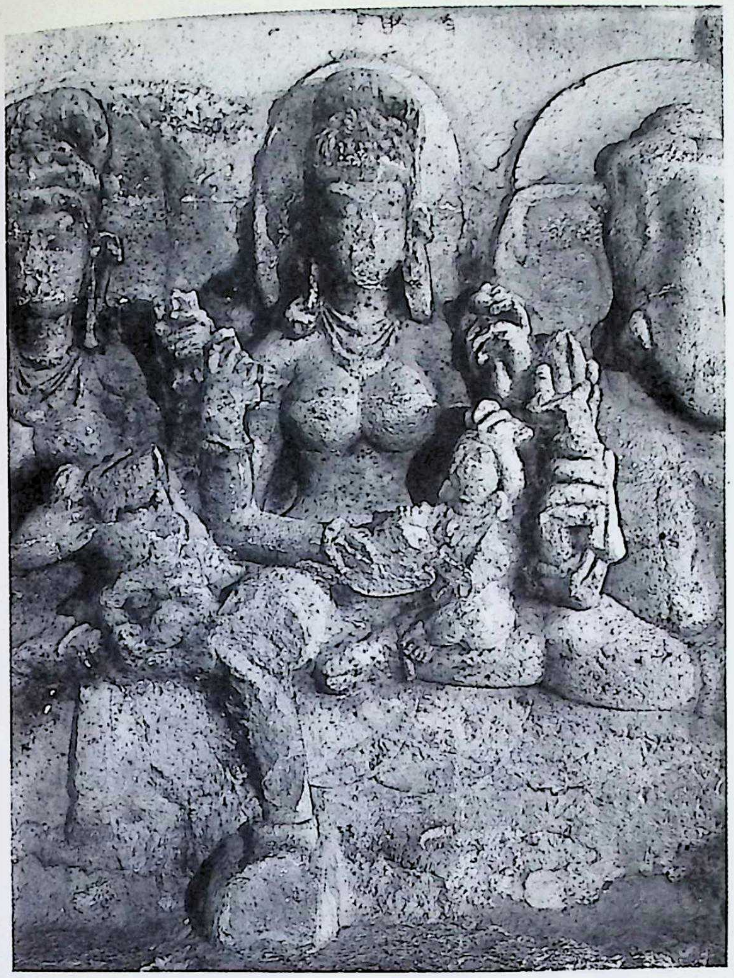
Pl. 111 *Saptamātṛkās, Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrti,* (*detail*), (Cave-16), Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



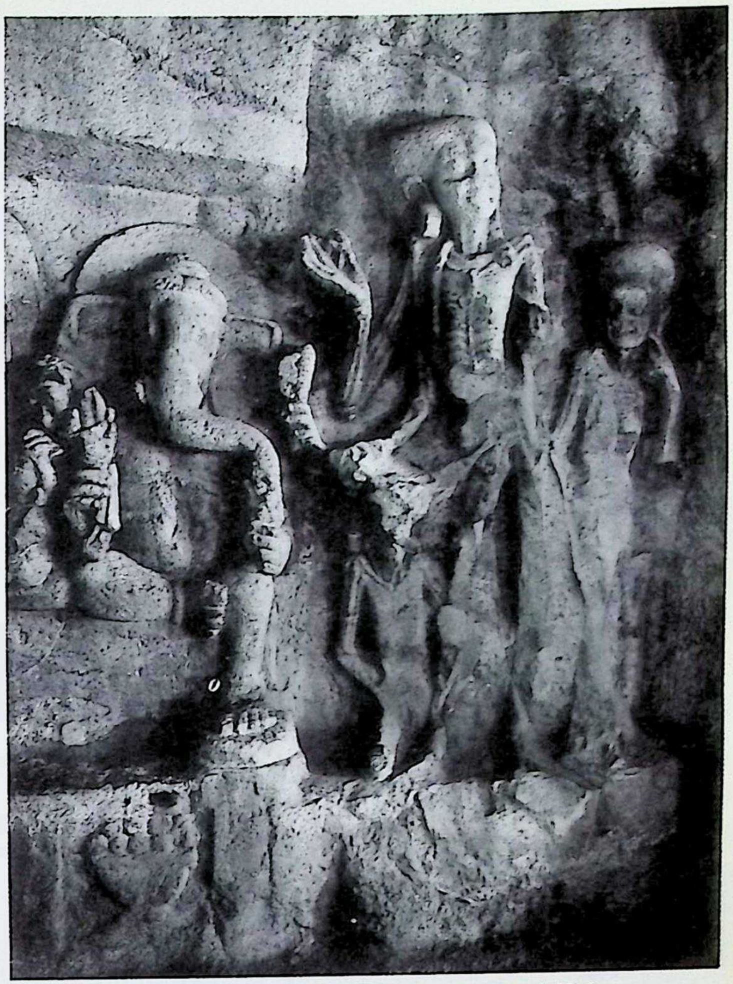
Pl. 112 *Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti,* Cave-14, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



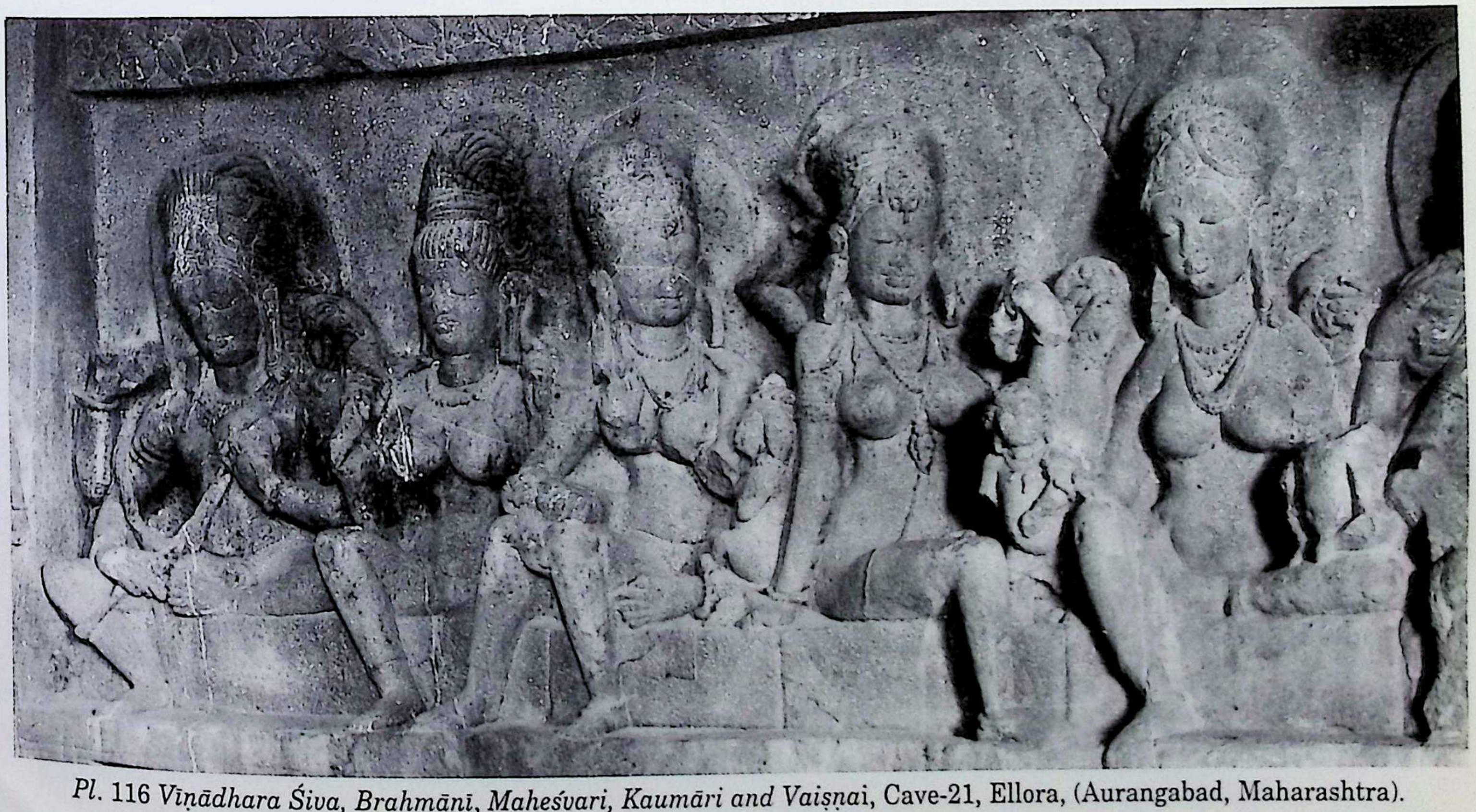
Pl. 113 *Saptamātṛkās*, Cave-14, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



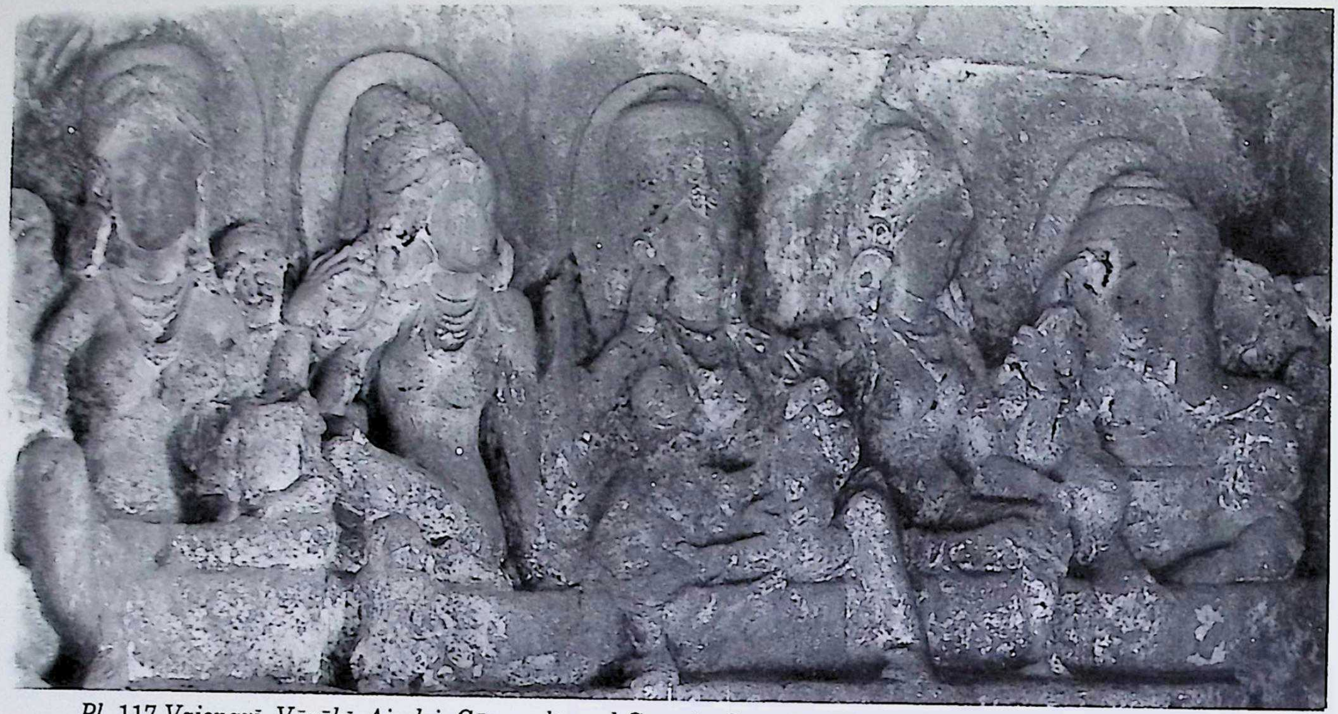
Pl. 114 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Cave-14, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



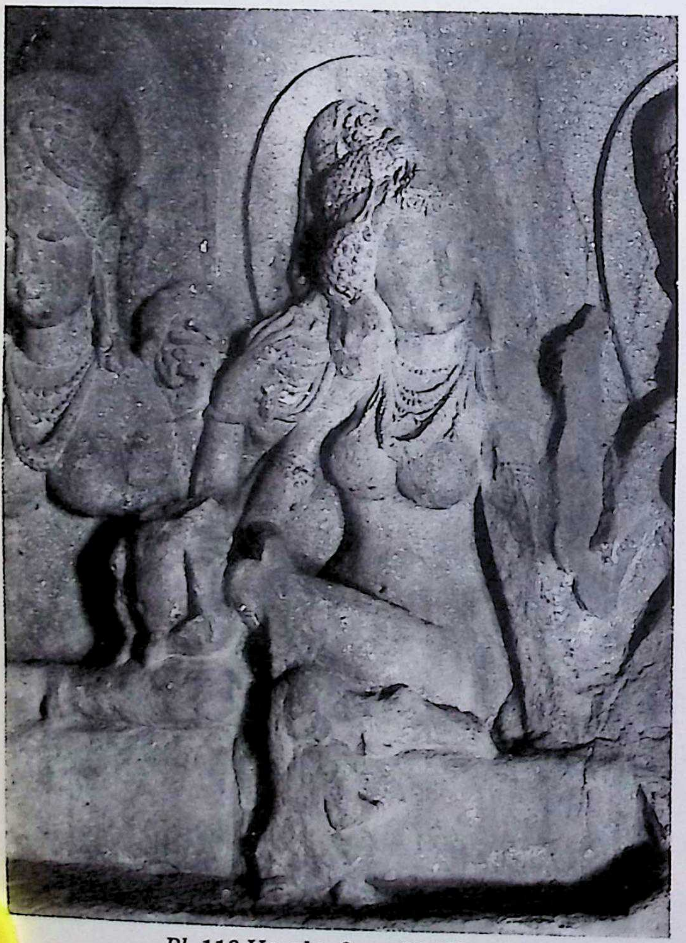
Pl. 115 *Gaṇeśa, Kāla Bhairava and Kālī*, Cave-14, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



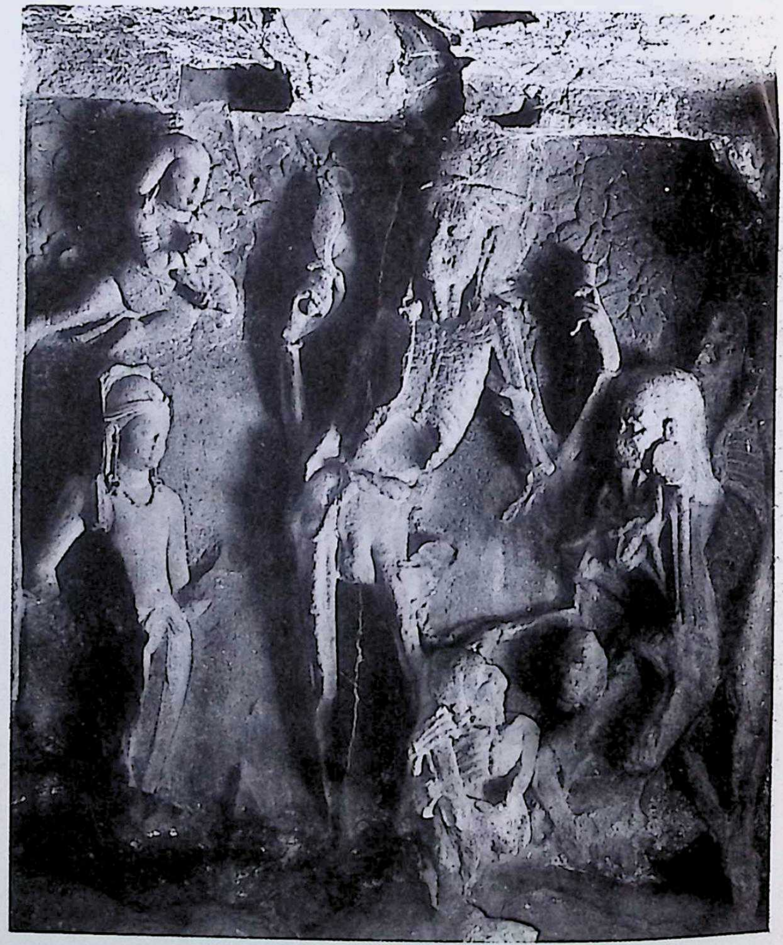
Pl. 116 *Vīṇādhara Śiva, Brahmāṇī, Maheśvari, Kaumāri and Vaiṣṇai*, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



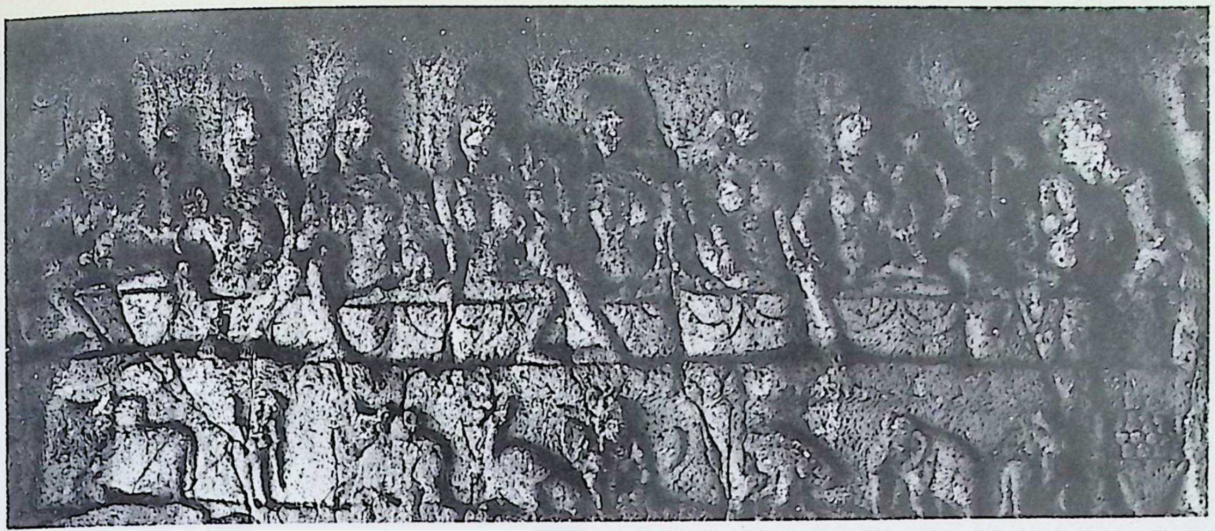
Pl. 117 *Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā and Gaṇeśa*, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



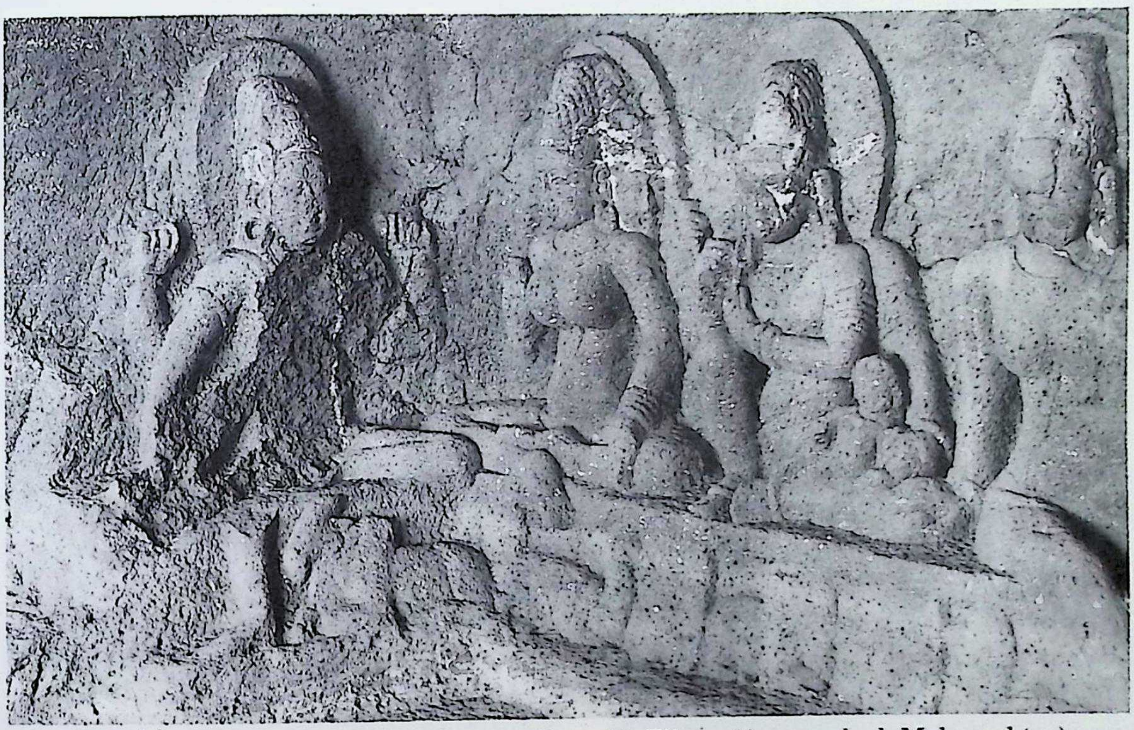
Pl. 118 *Vārāhī*, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



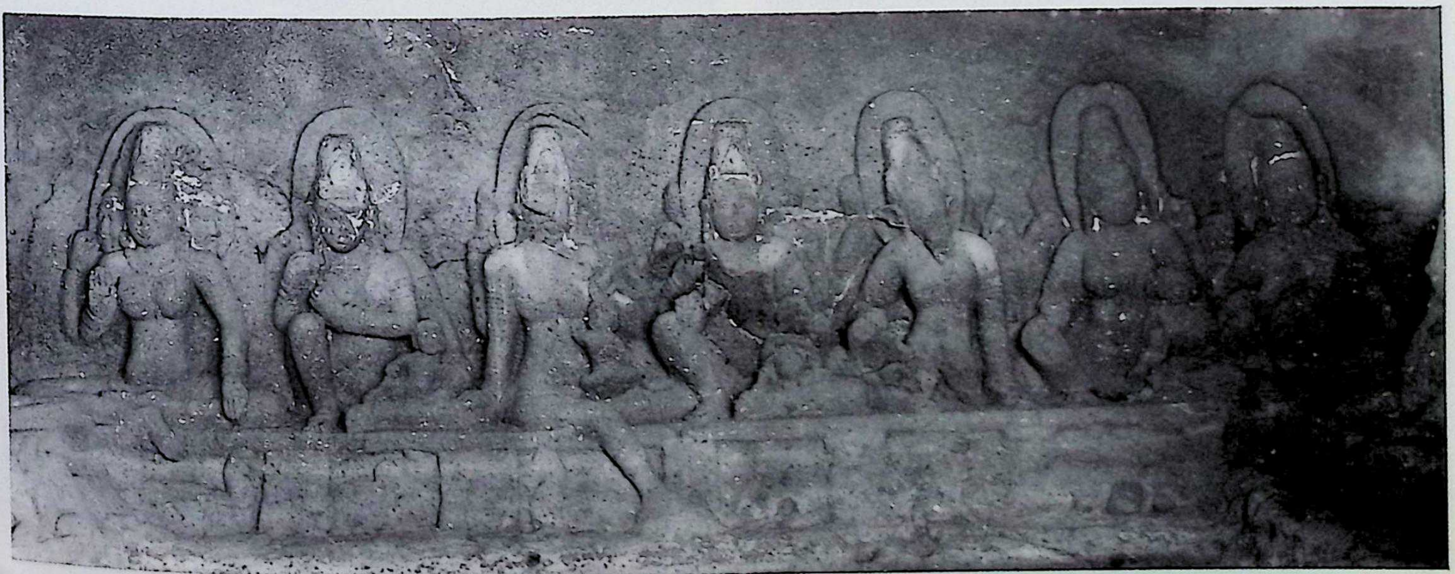
Pl. 119 *Kāla Bhairava and Kālī*, Cave-21, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



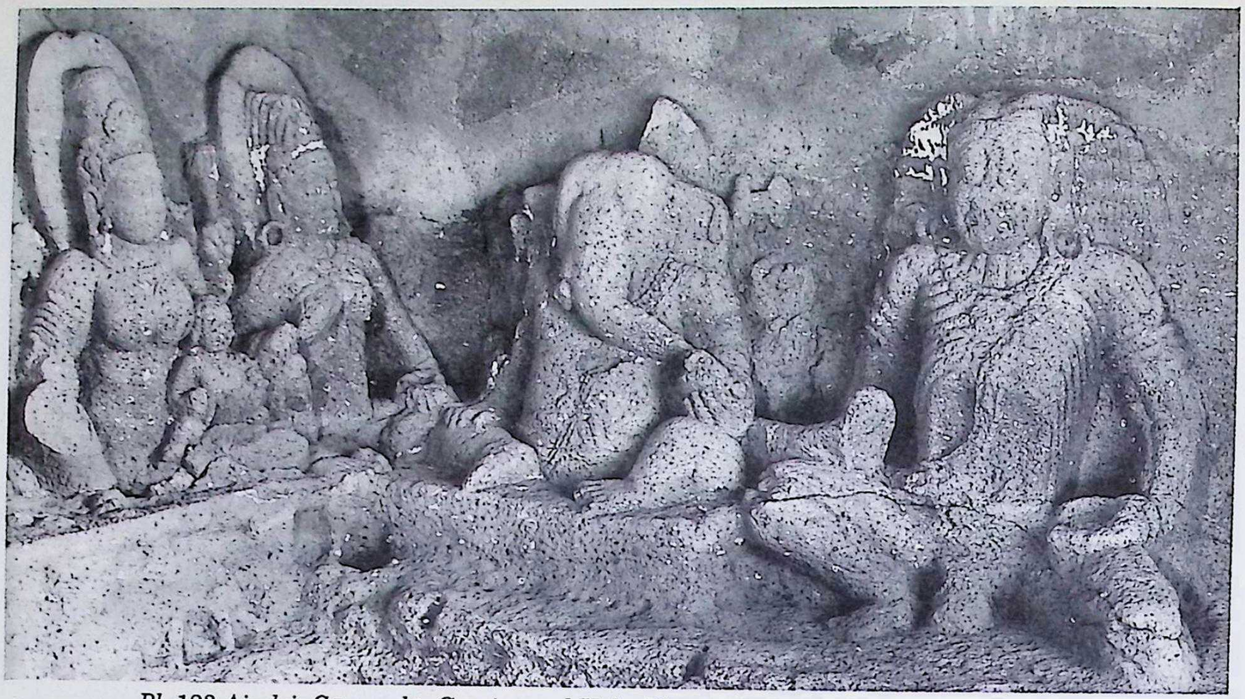
Pl. 120 *Saptamātṛkās*, Doke Takli, (Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra).



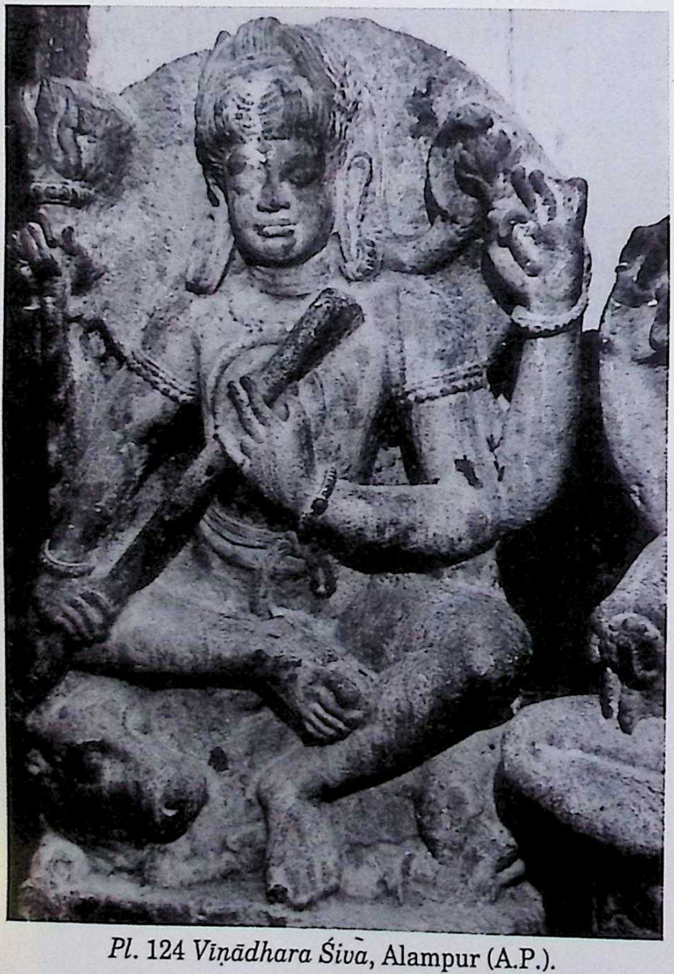
Pl. 121 *Śiva, Brahmāṇī and Maheśvarī*, Cave-22, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



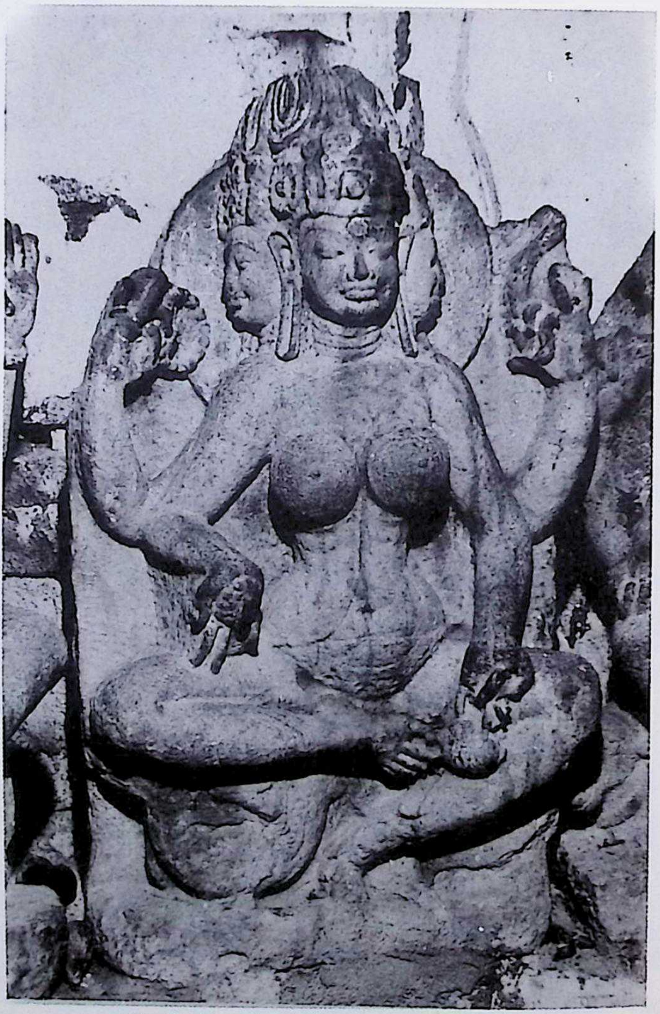
Pl. 122 *Saptamātṛkās*, Cave-22, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



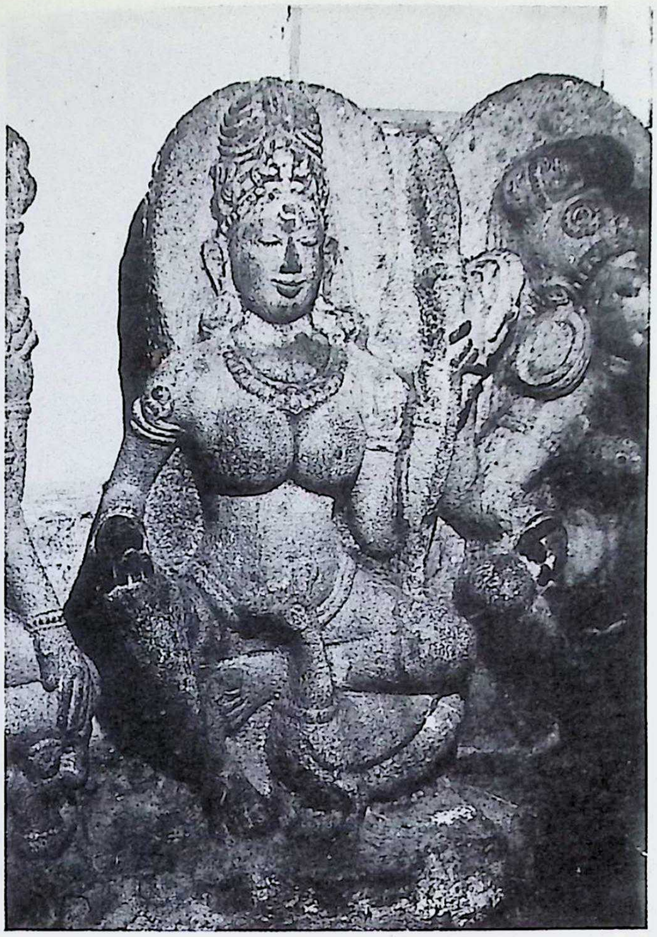
Pl. 123 *Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Gaṇeśa and Kāla Bhairava, Saptamātṛkā group (detail),* Cave-22, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



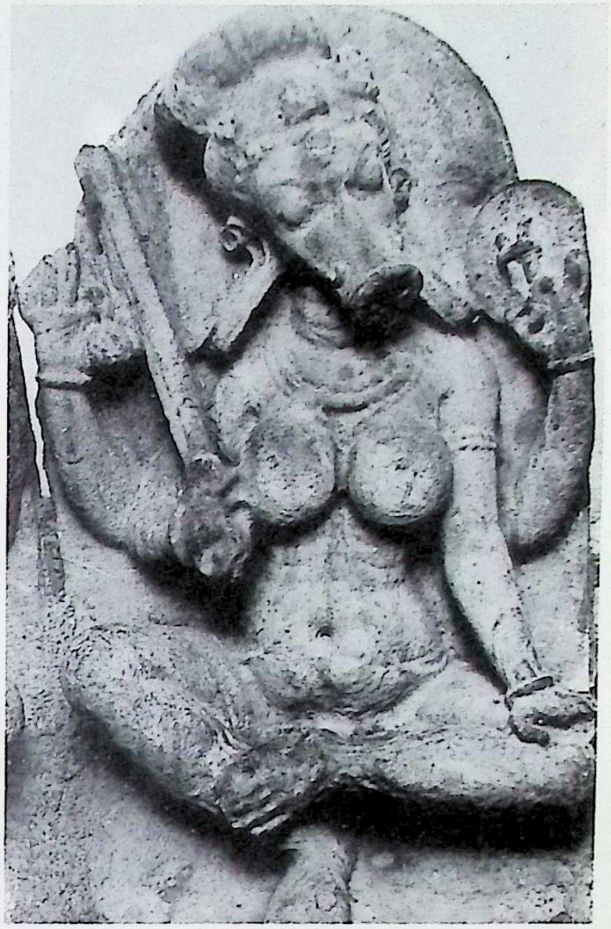
Pl. 124 *Viṇādhara Śiva*, Alampur (A.P.).



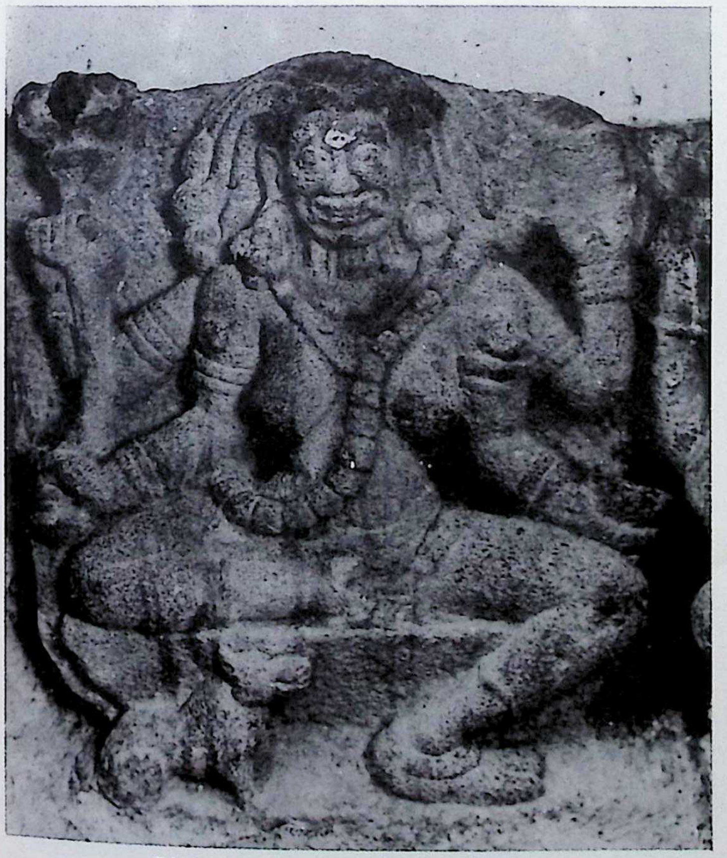
Pl. 125 *Brahmāṇī*, Alampur, (A.P.).



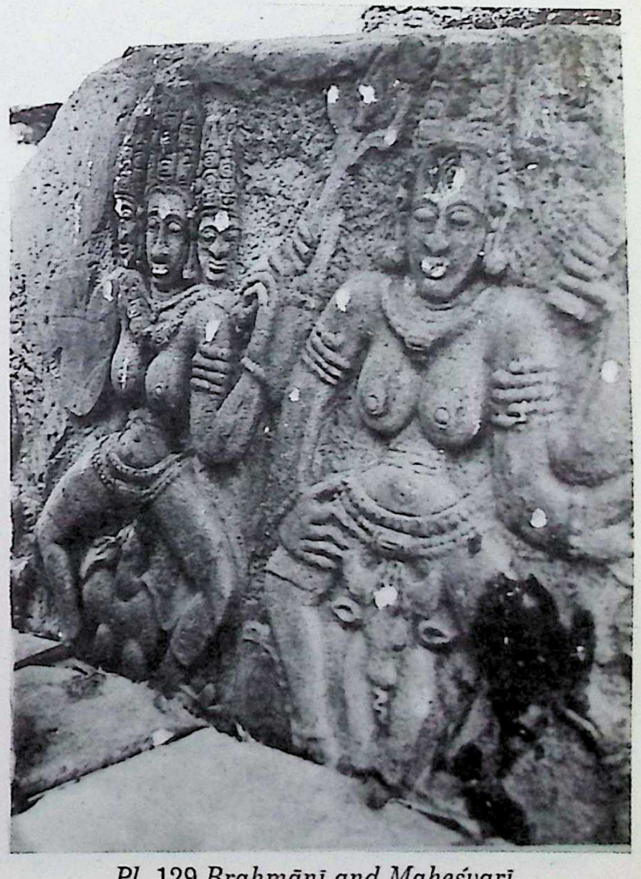
Pl. 126 *Kaumāri*, Alampur, (A.P.).



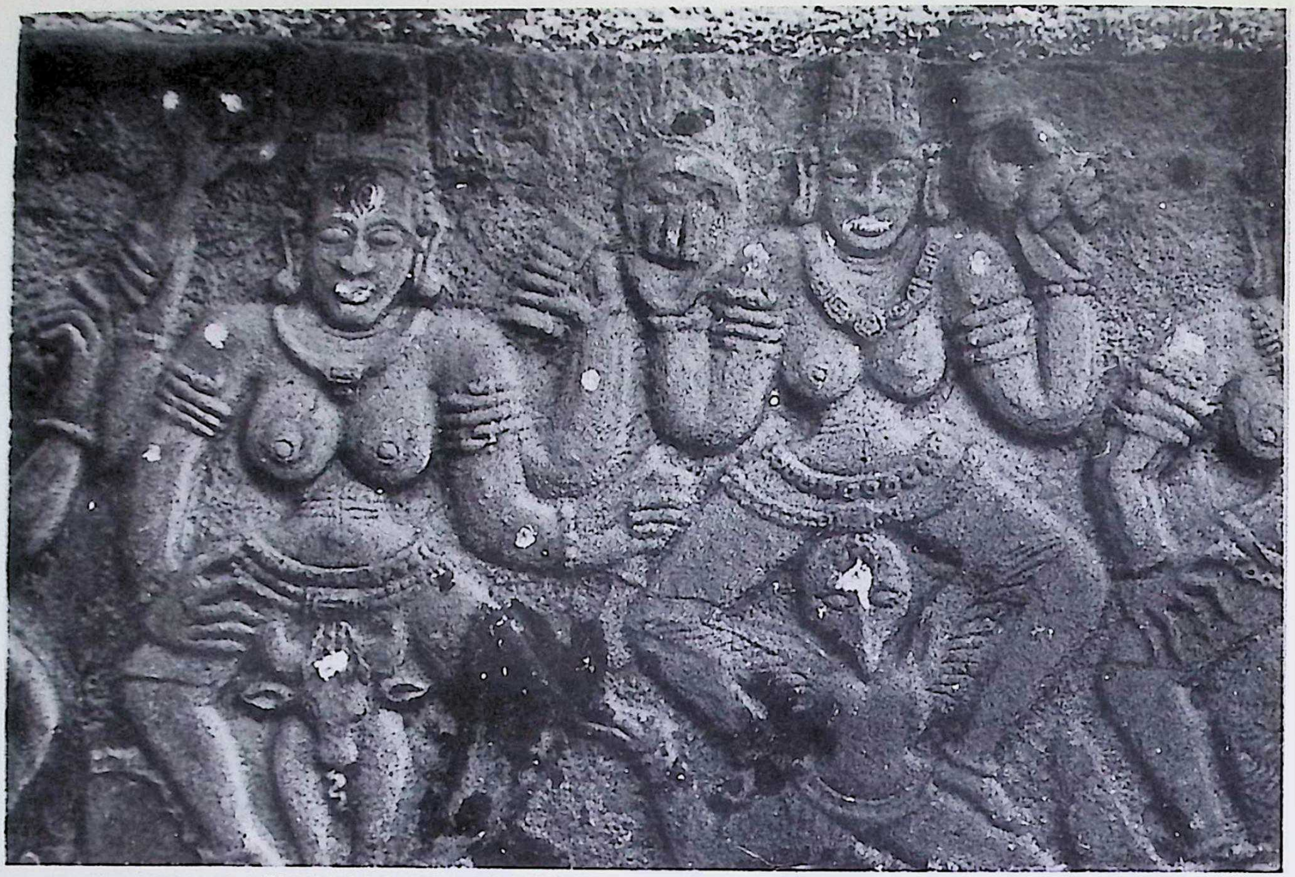
Pl. 127 *Vārāhī*, Alampur, (A.P.).



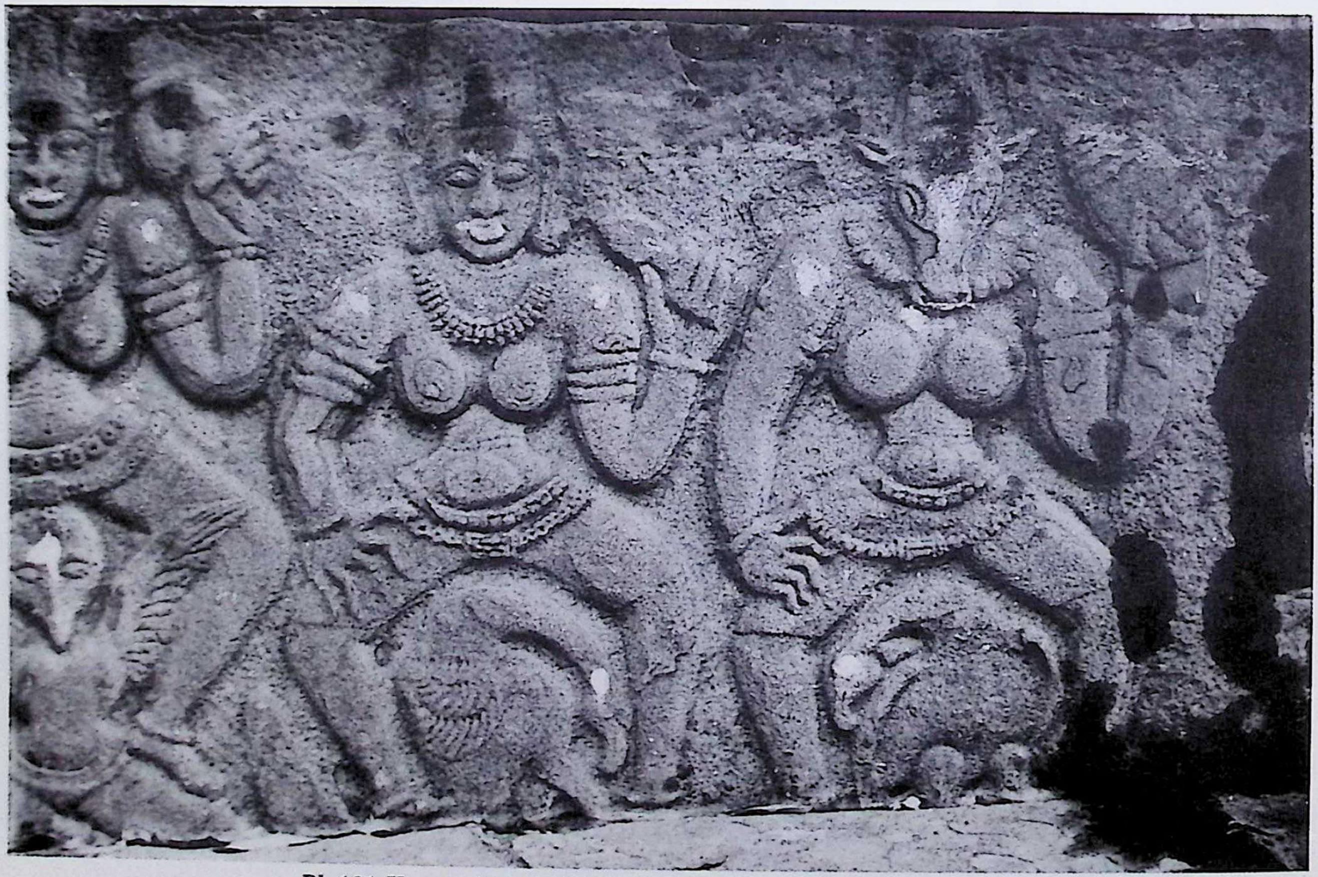
Pl. 128 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Alampur, (A.P.).



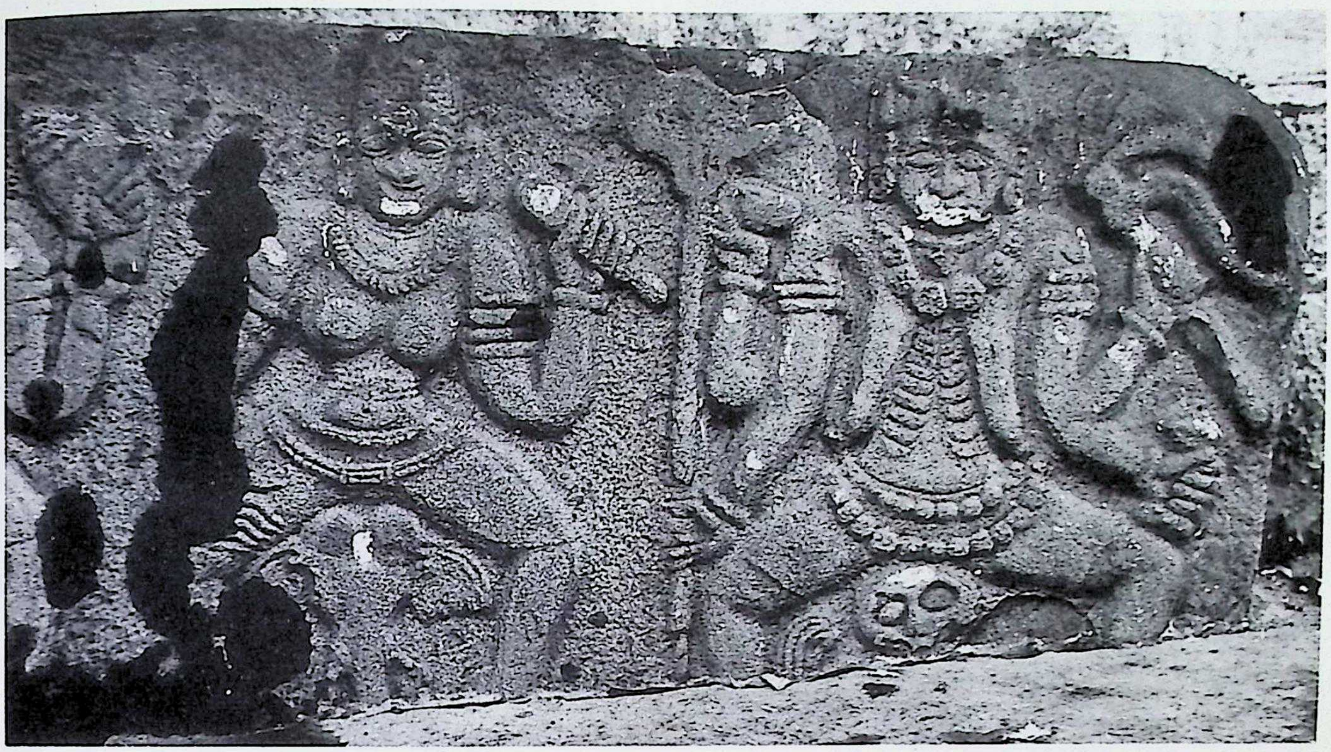
Pl. 129 *Brahmāṇī and Maheśvarī*,
Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.).



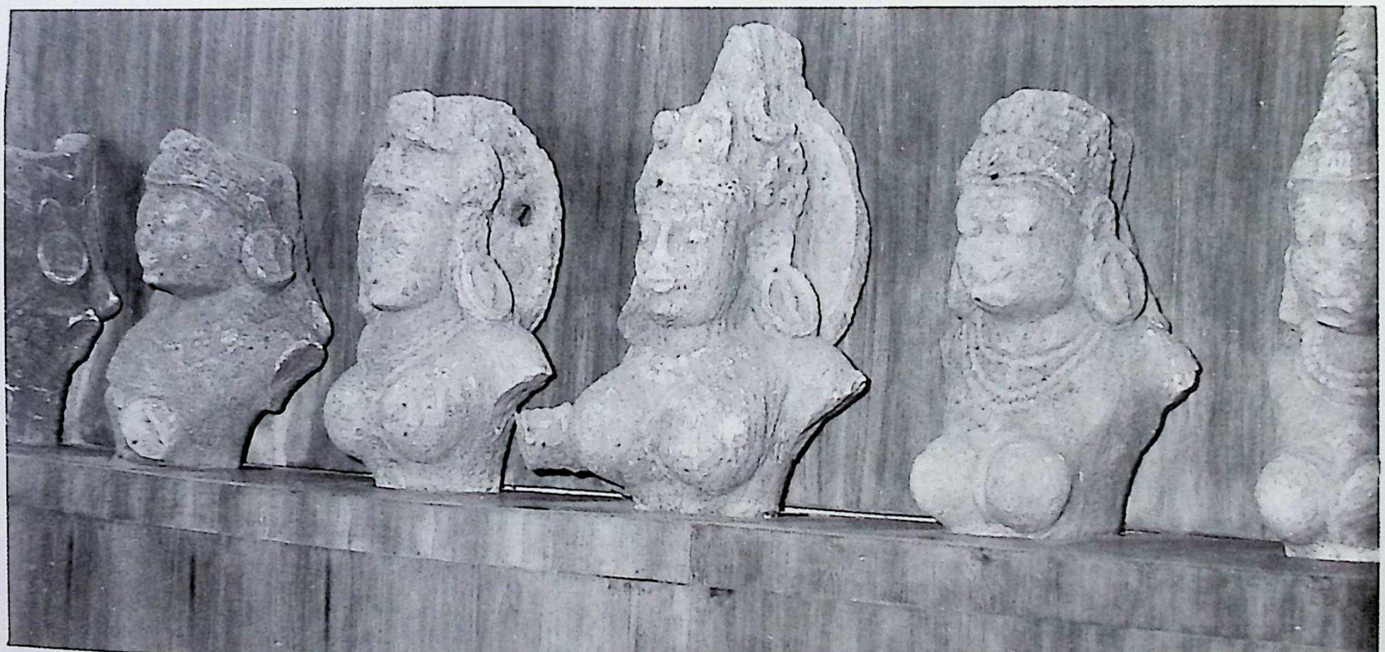
Pl. 130 *Maheśvarī and Vaiṣṇavī*, Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.).



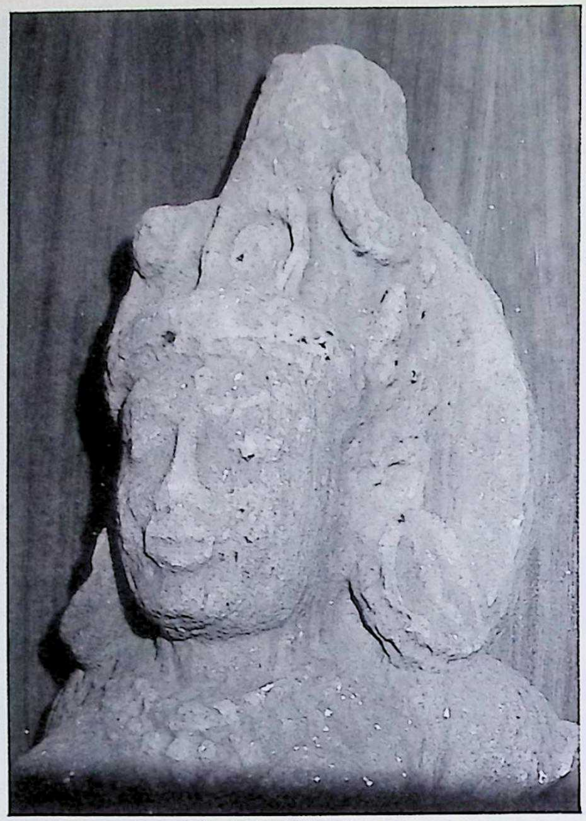
Pl. 131 *Kaumāri and Vārāhī*, Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.).



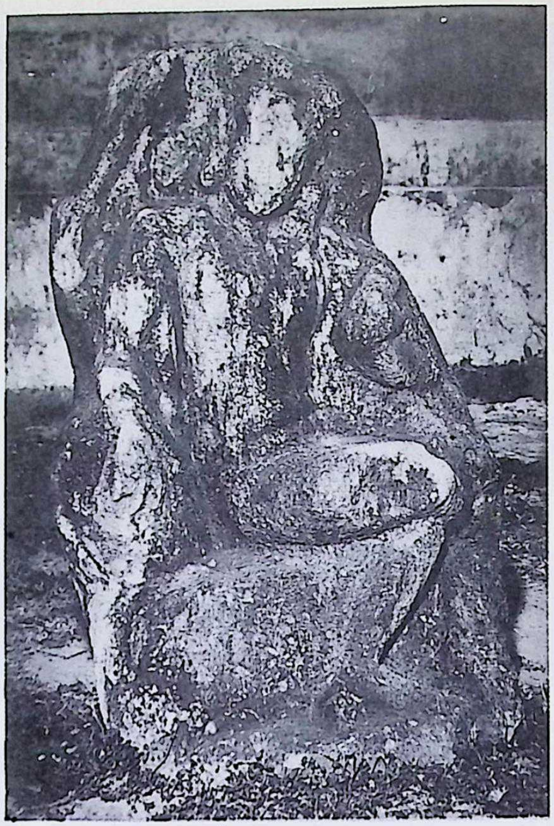
Pl. 132 *Aindri and Cāmuṇḍā*, Prodduturi, (Ramesvaram, A.P.).



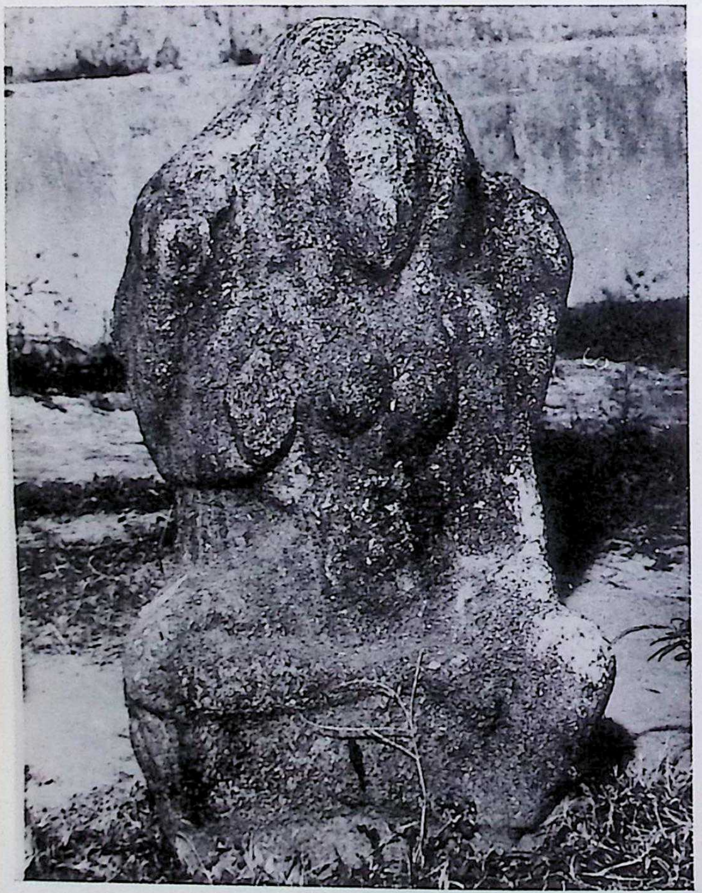
Pl. 133 *Mātṛkā group*, Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka).



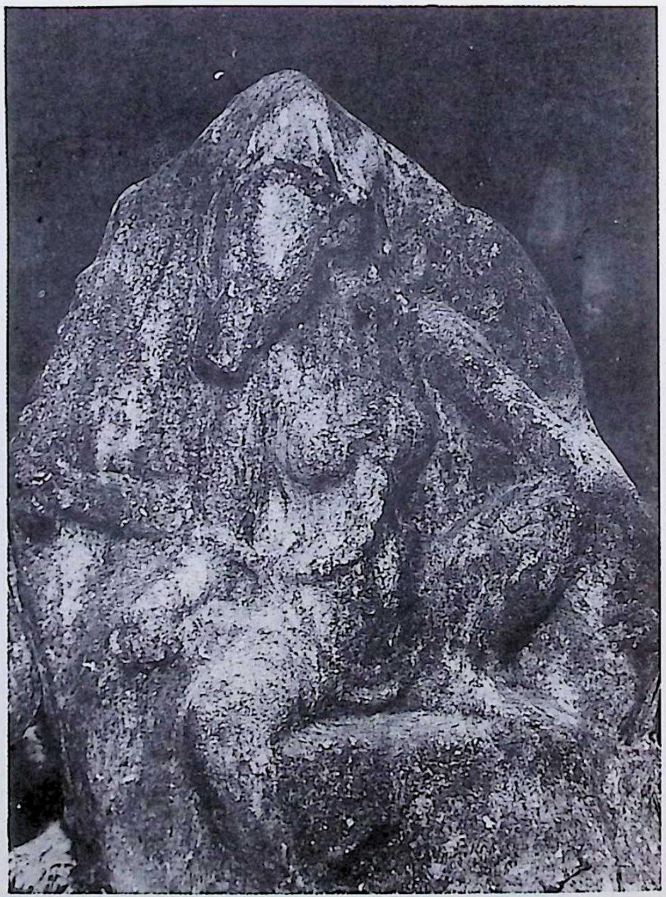
Pl. 134 *Maheśvarī,*
Aihole, (Bijapur, Karnataka).



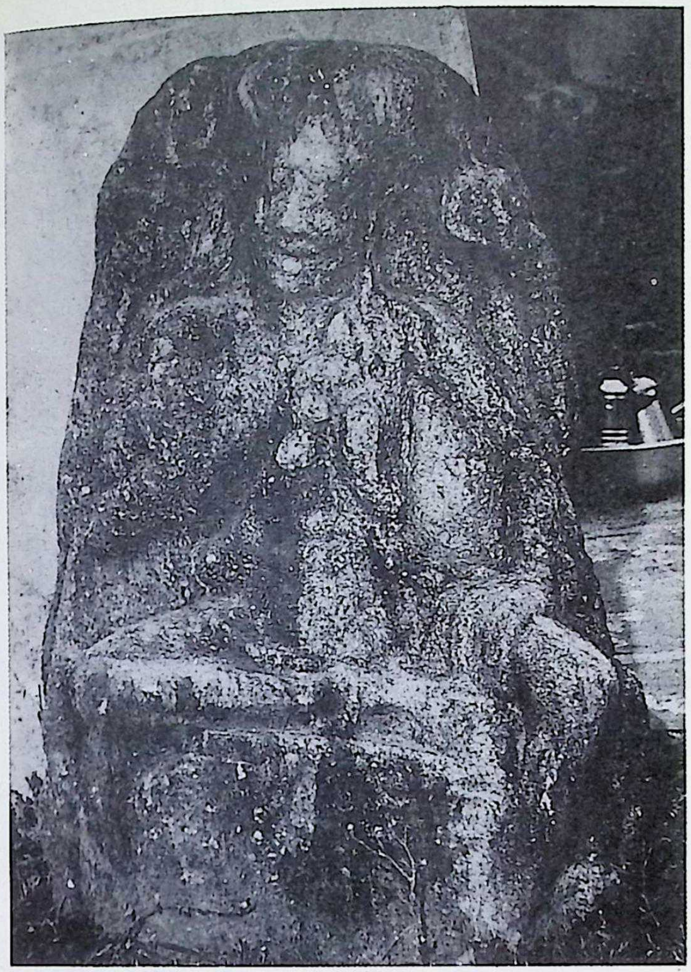
Pl. 135 *Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti,*
Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.).



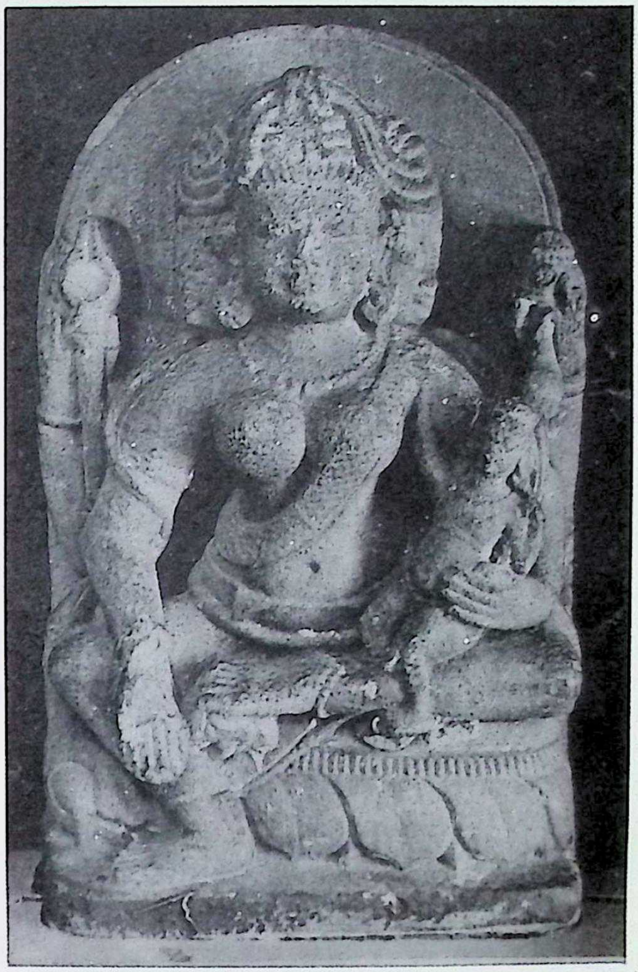
Pl. 136 *Brahmāṇī*, Chezerla,
Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.).



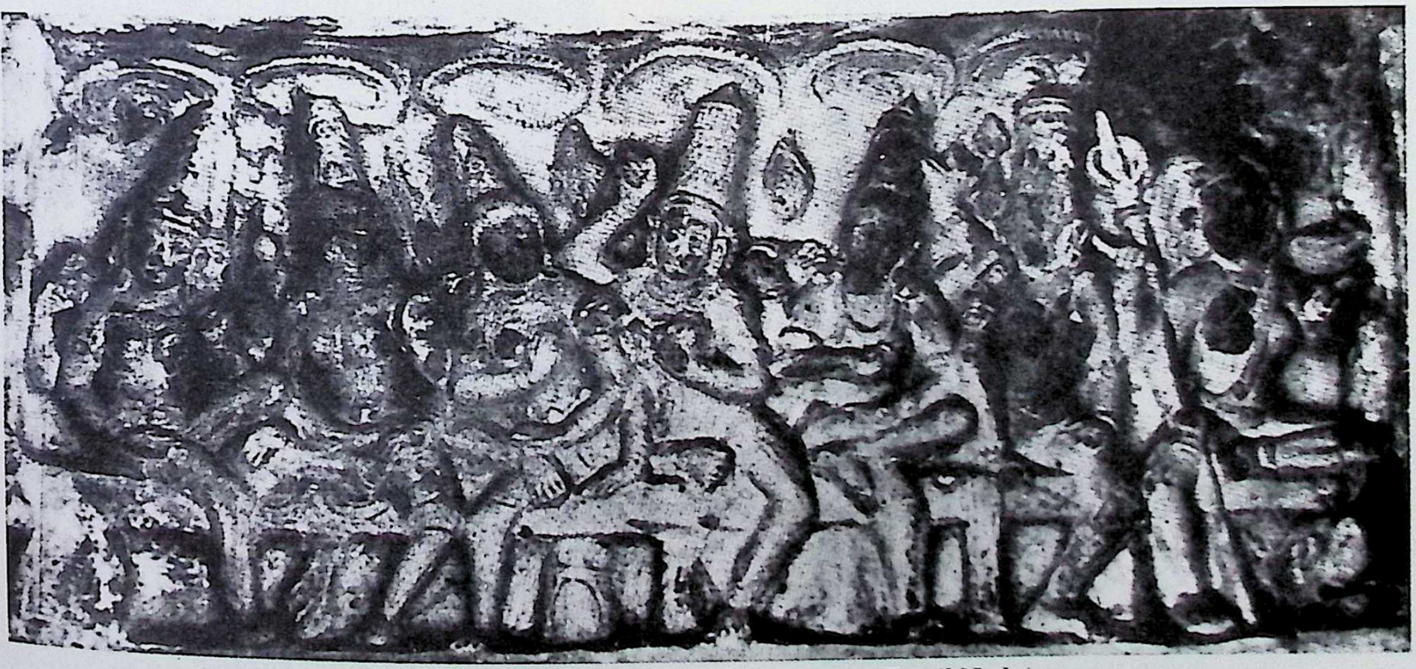
Pl. 137 *Vārāhī,* Chezerla,
Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.).



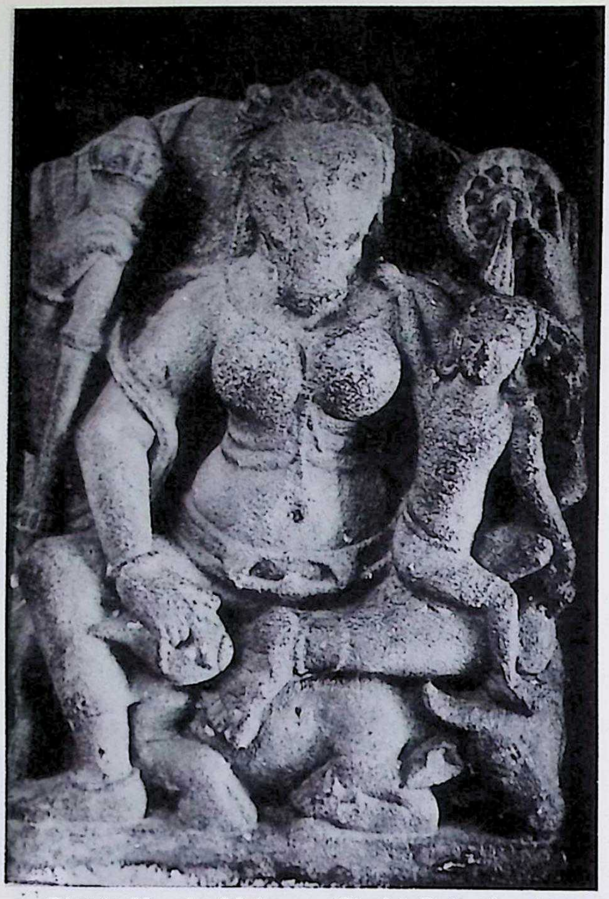
Pl. 138 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Chezerla, Chezerla, (Guntur, A.P.).



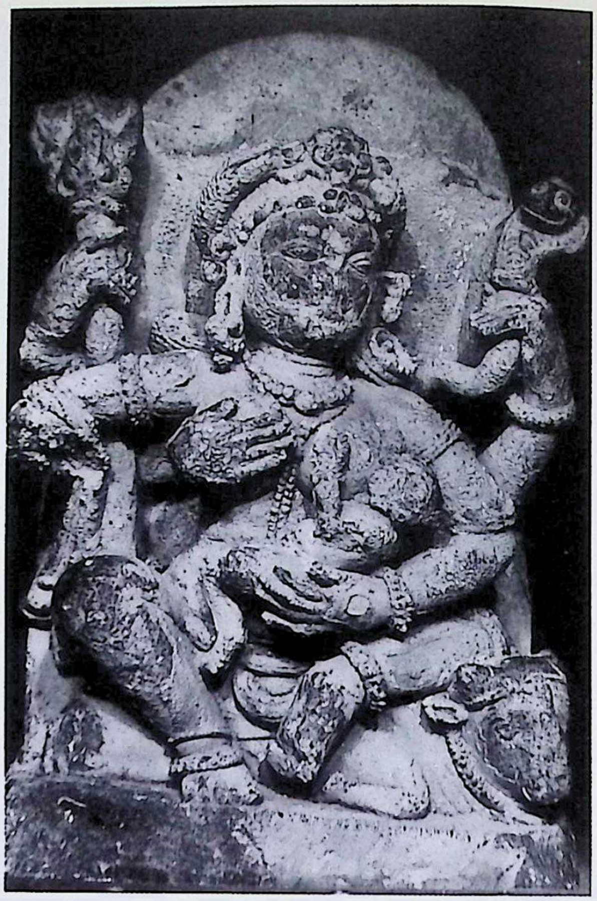
Pl. 139 *Brahmāṇī*, Malagon, (Sirohi, Rajasthan).



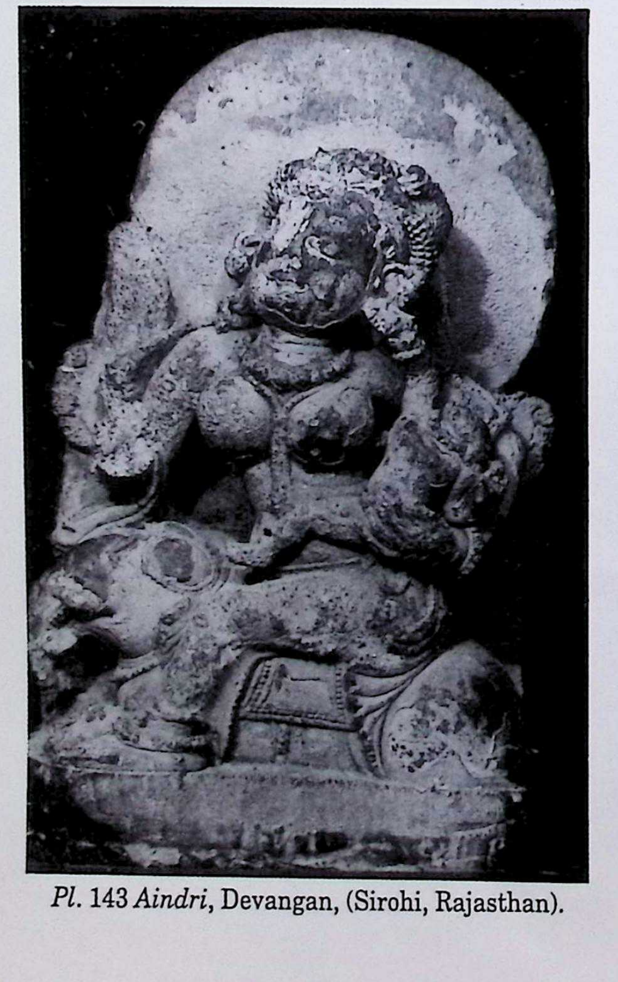
Pl. 140 *Saptamātṛkā group*, Kanchipuram, (Tamil Nadu).



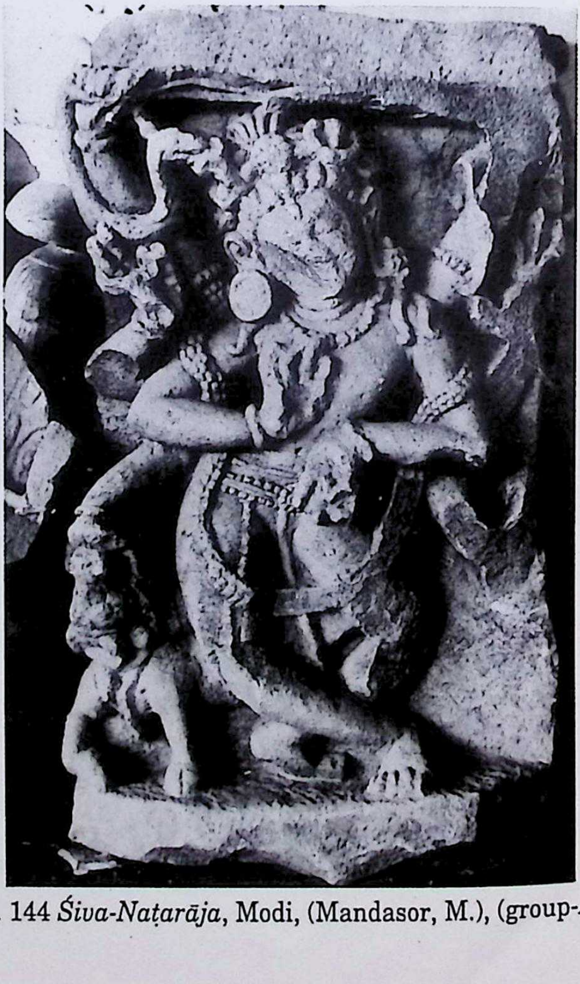
Pl. 141 *Vārāhī*, Malagon, (Sirohi, Rajasthan).



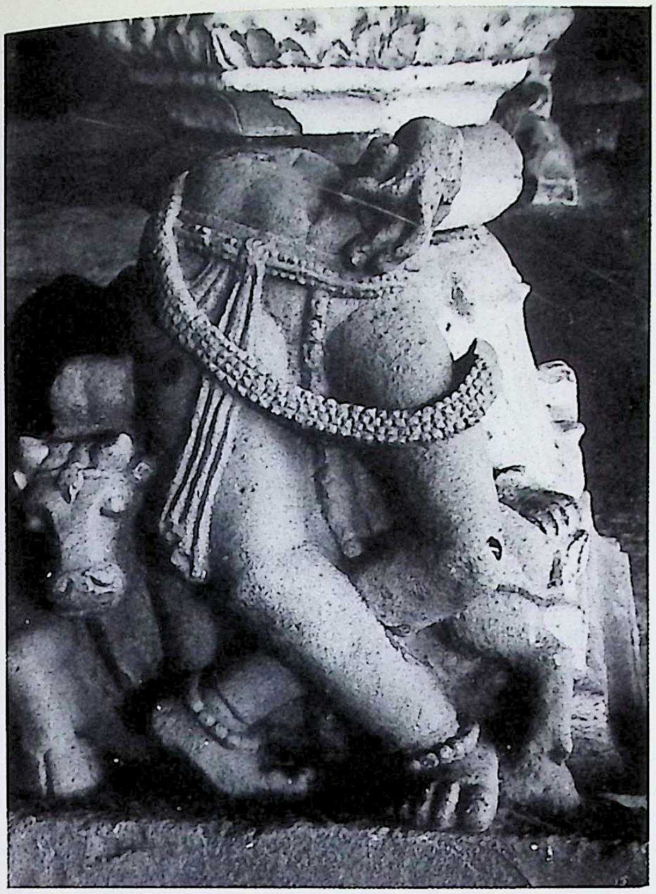
Pl. 142 *Maheśvarī*, Devangan, (Sirohi, Rajasthan).



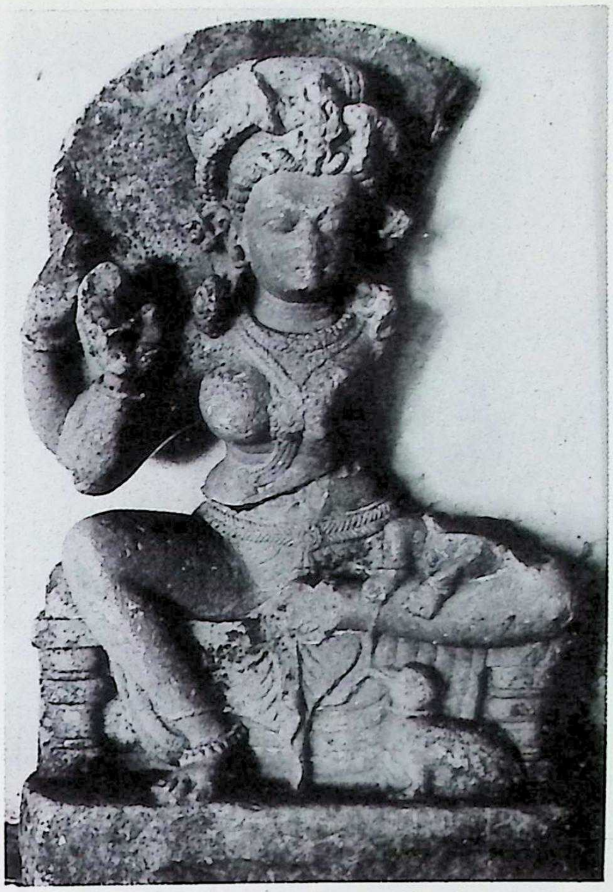
Pl. 143 *Aindri*, Devangan, (Sirohi, Rajasthan).



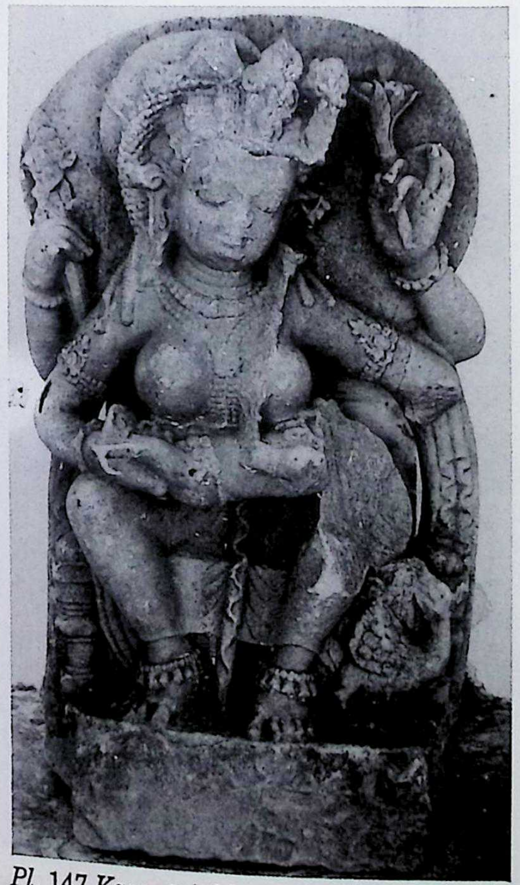
Pl. 144 *Śiva-Naṭarāja*, Modi, (Mandasor, M.), (group-A).



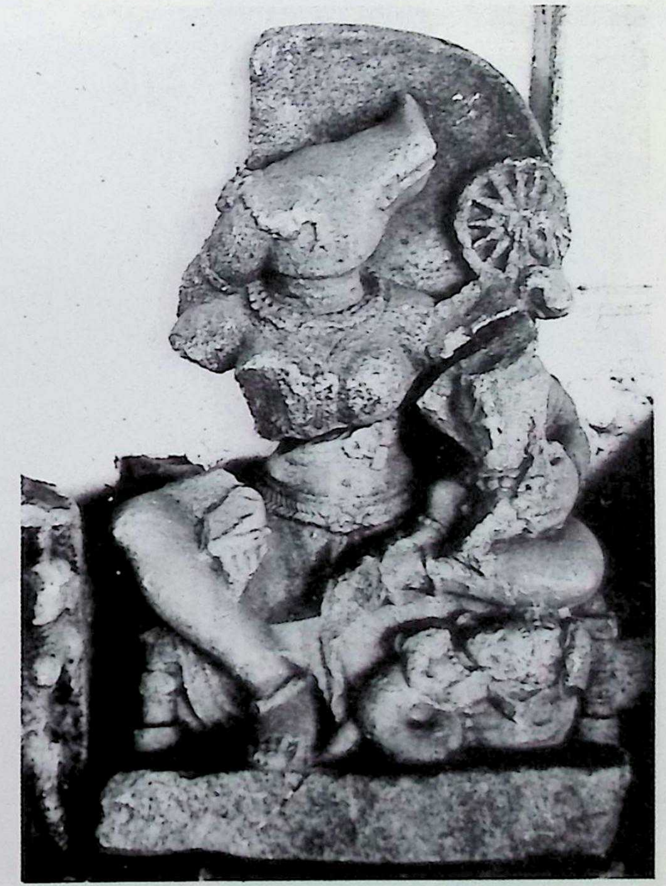
Pl. 145 *Maheśvarī*, Modi,
(Mandasor, M.P.), (group-A).



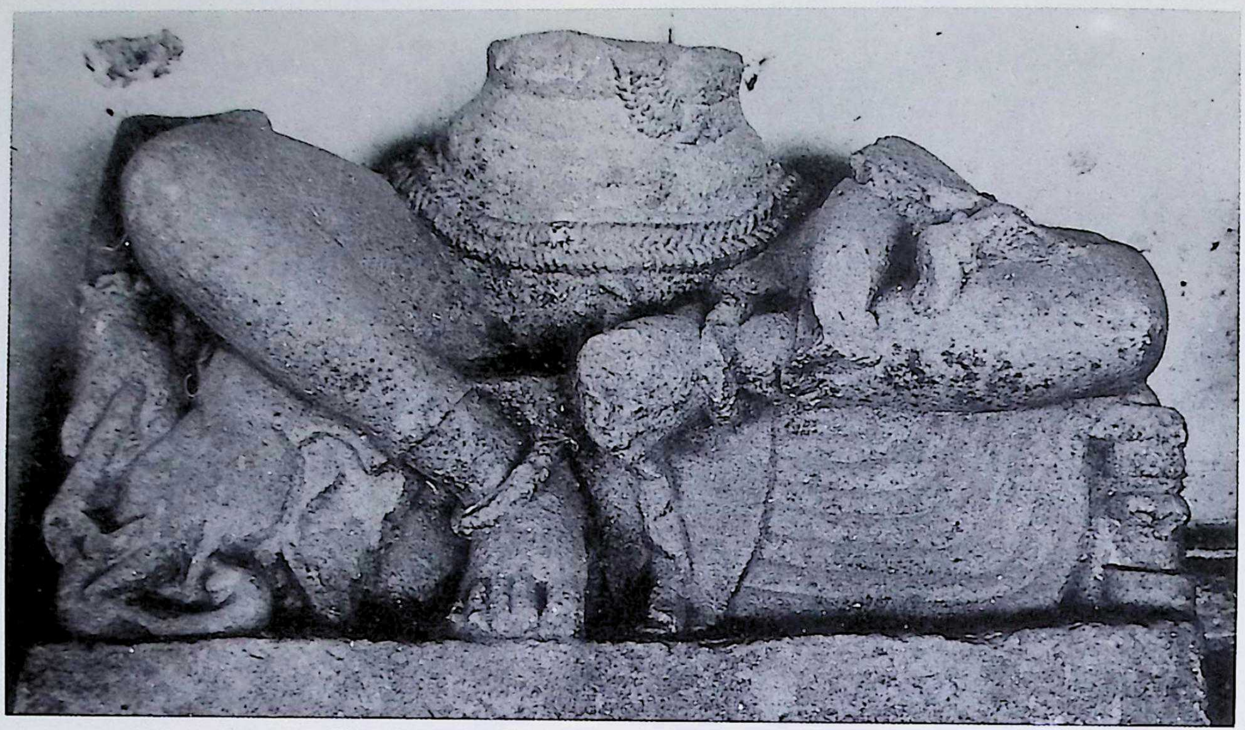
Pl. 146 *Brahmāṇī,* Modi,
(Mandasor, M.P.), (group-B).



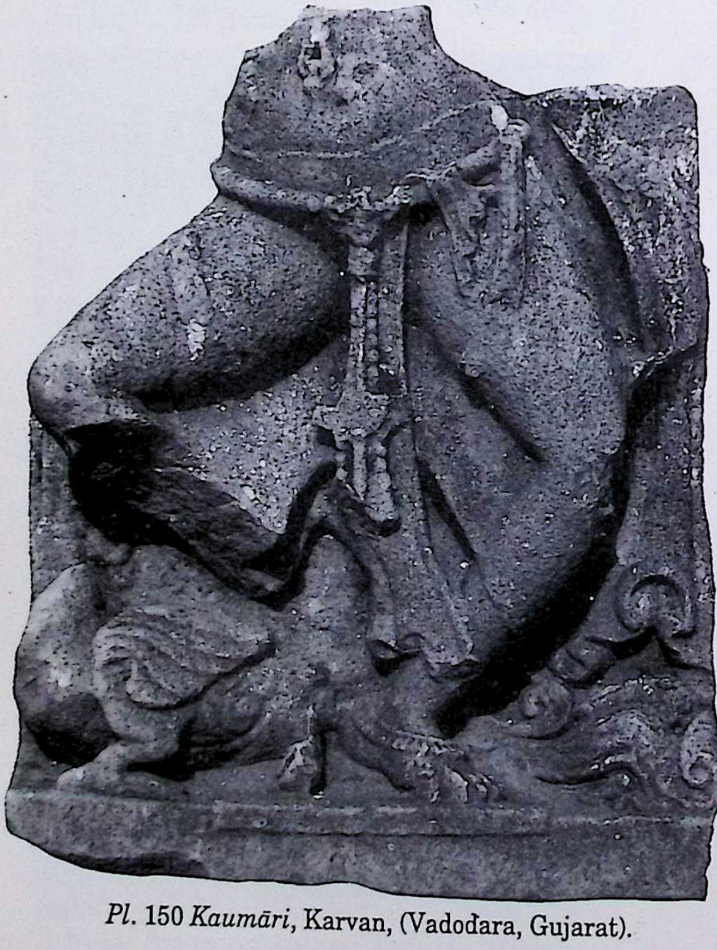
Pl. 147 *Kaumāri*, Modi,
(Mandasor, M.), (group-B).



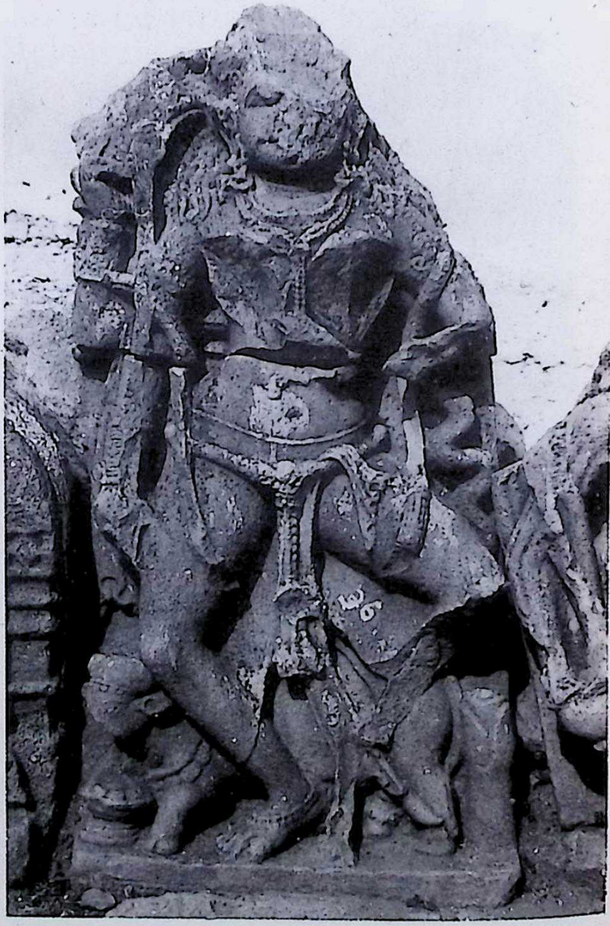
Pl. 148 *Vārāhī*, Modi,
(Mandasor, M.P.), (group-B).



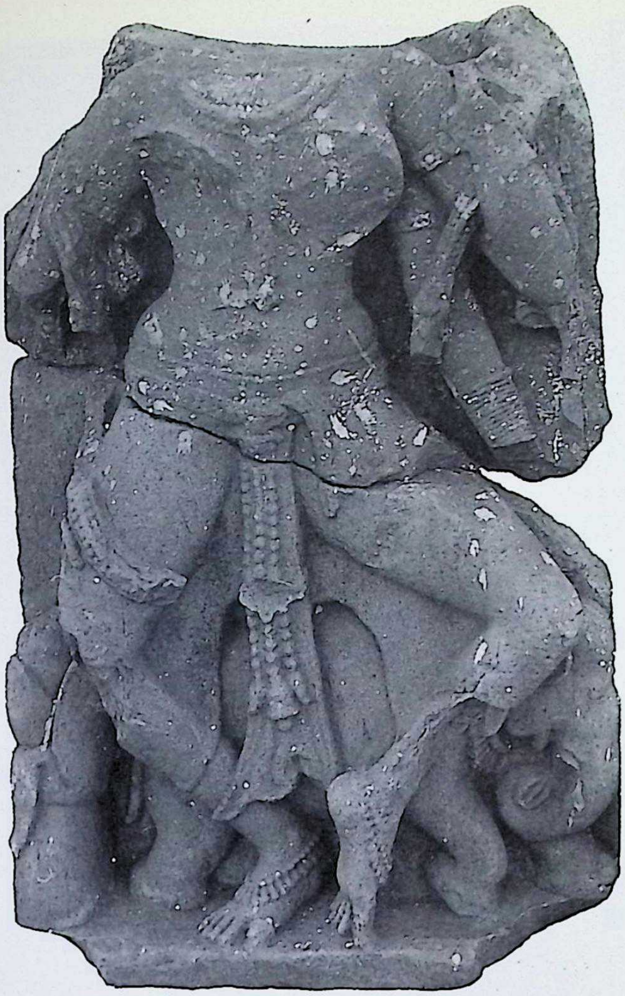
Pl. 149 *Aindri,* Modi, (Mandasor, M.P.), (group-B).



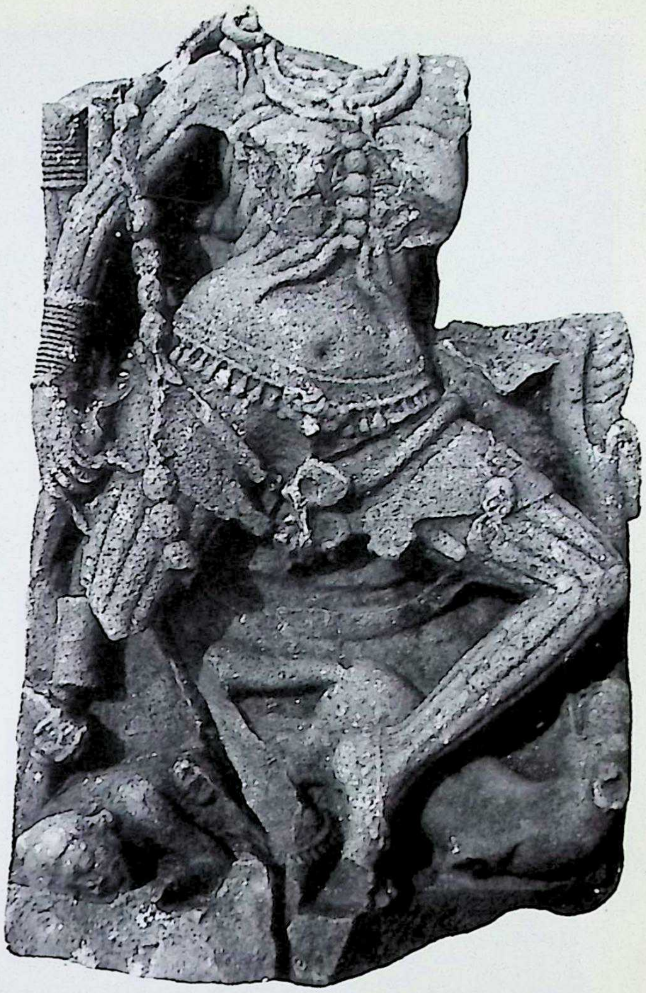
Pl. 150 *Kaumāri*, Karvan, (Vadoḍara, Gujarat).



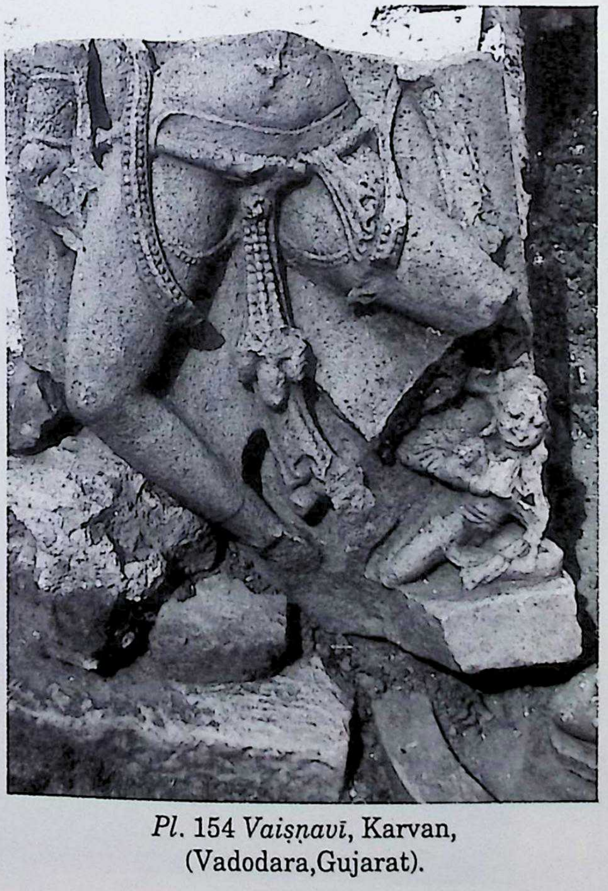
Pl. 151 *Maheśvari*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat).



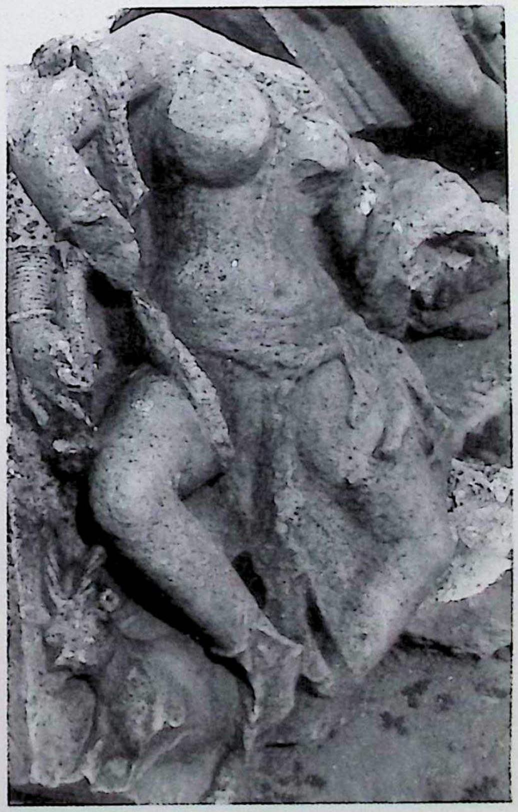
Pl. 152 *Aindri*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat).



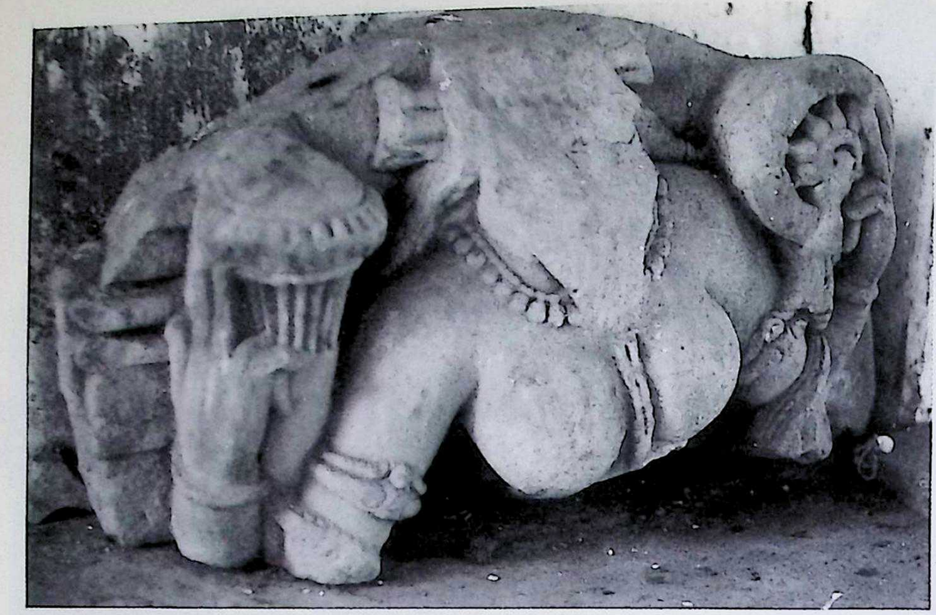
Pl. 153 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Karvan, (Vadodara,Gujarat).



Pl. 154 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Karvan,
(Vadodara,Gujarat).

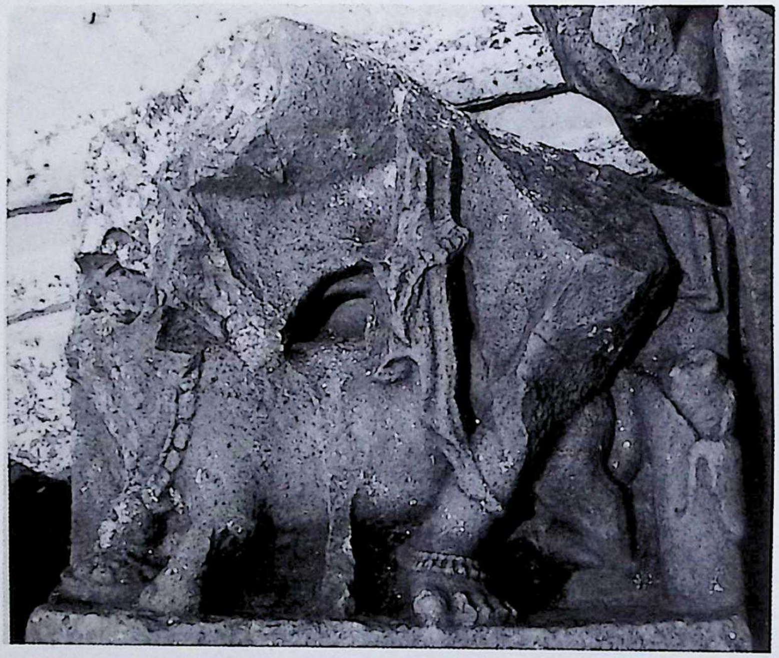


Pl. 155 *Vāyavī* (?), Karvan,
(Vadodara,Gujarat).

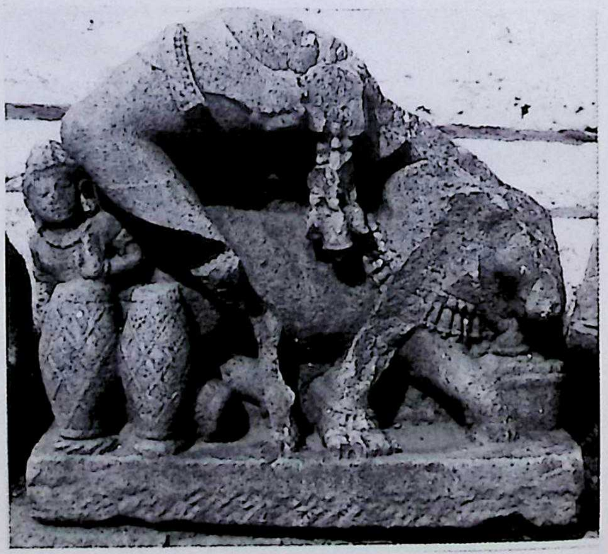


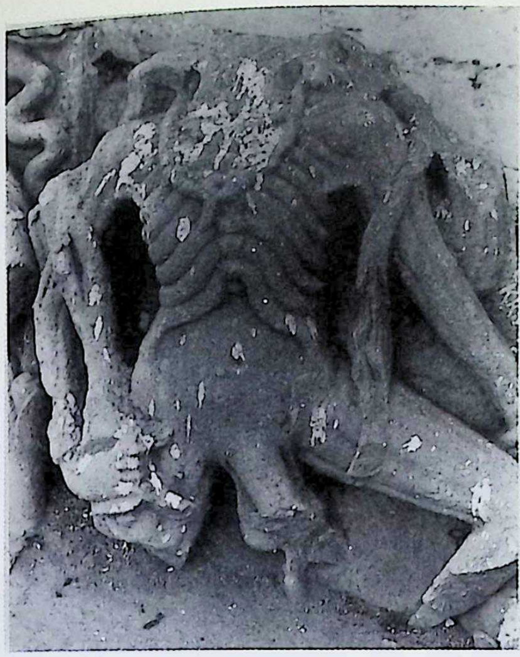
Pl. 156 *Torso of Vārāhī*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat).

Pl. 157 *Lower part of Vārāhī*, Karvan (Vadodara, Gujarat).

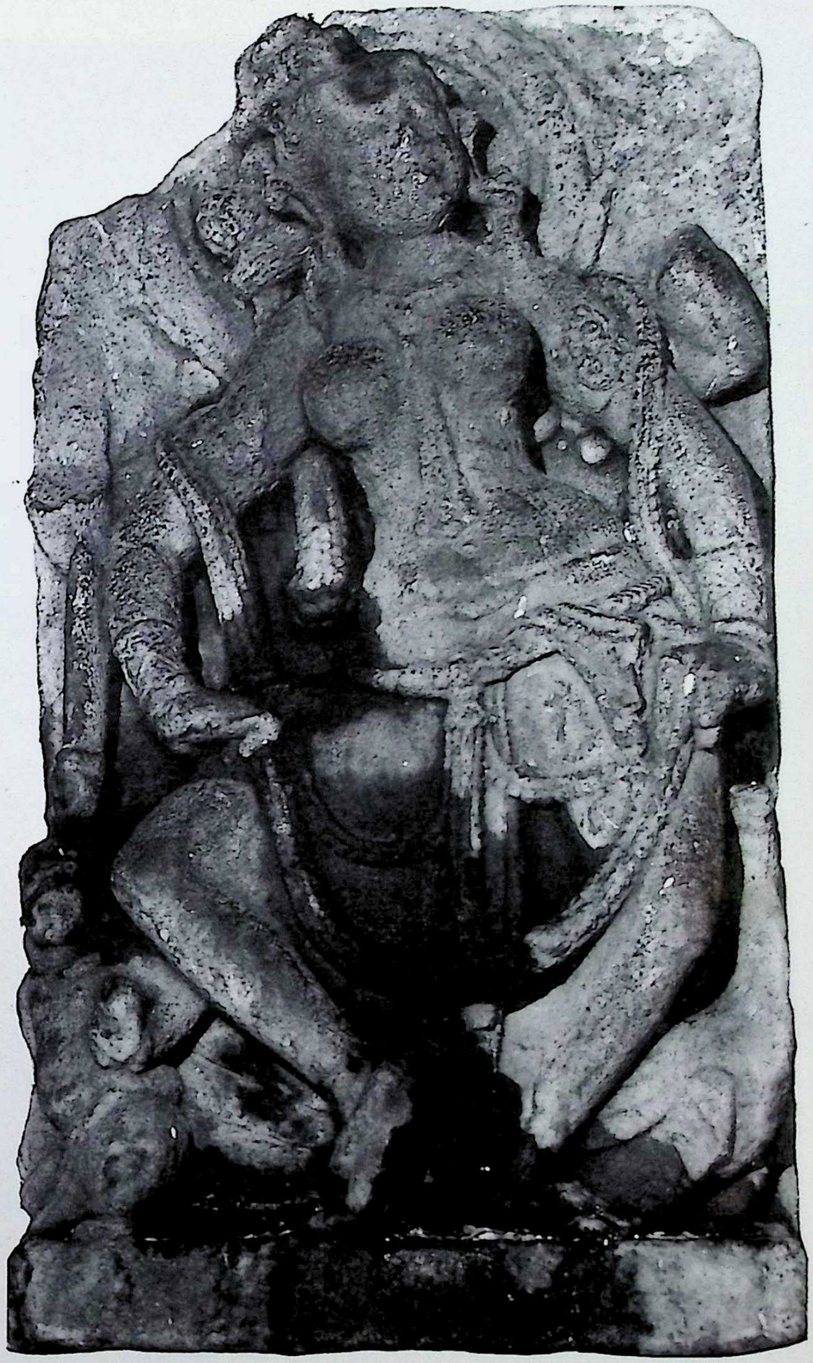


Pl. 158 *Lower part of Śiva*, Karvan, (Vadodara, Gujarat).

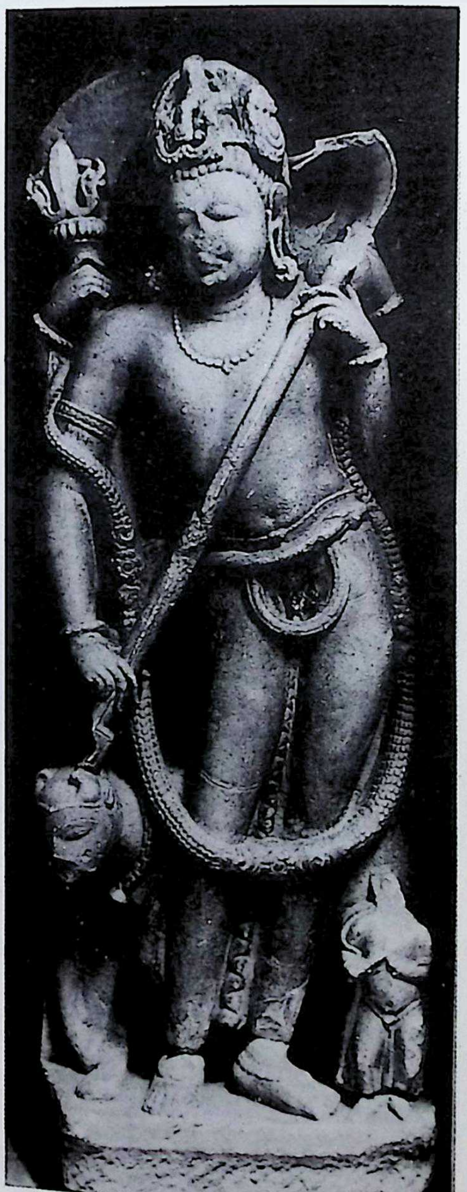




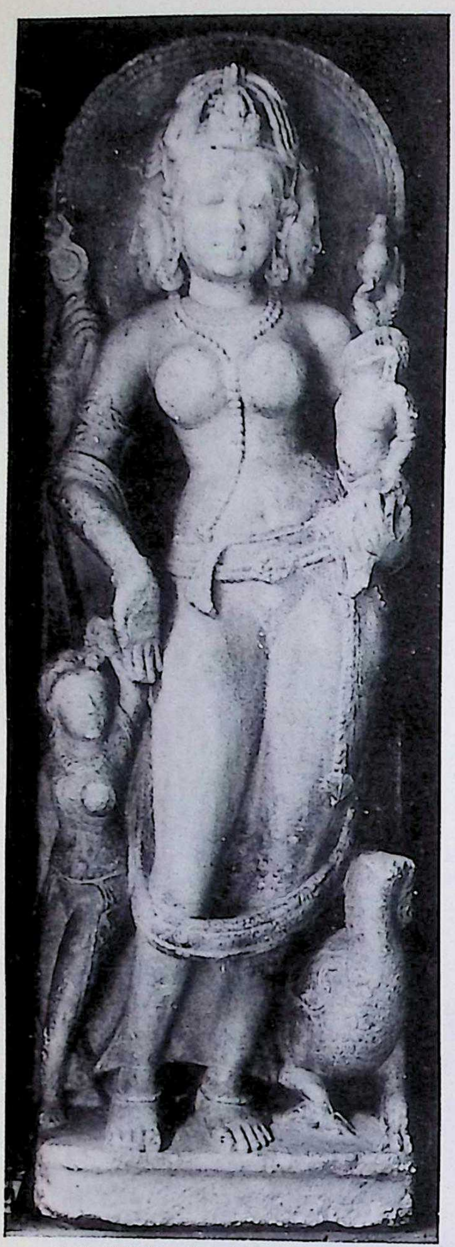
Pl. 159 *Kāla Bhairava*,
Karvan, (Vadodara,Gujarat).



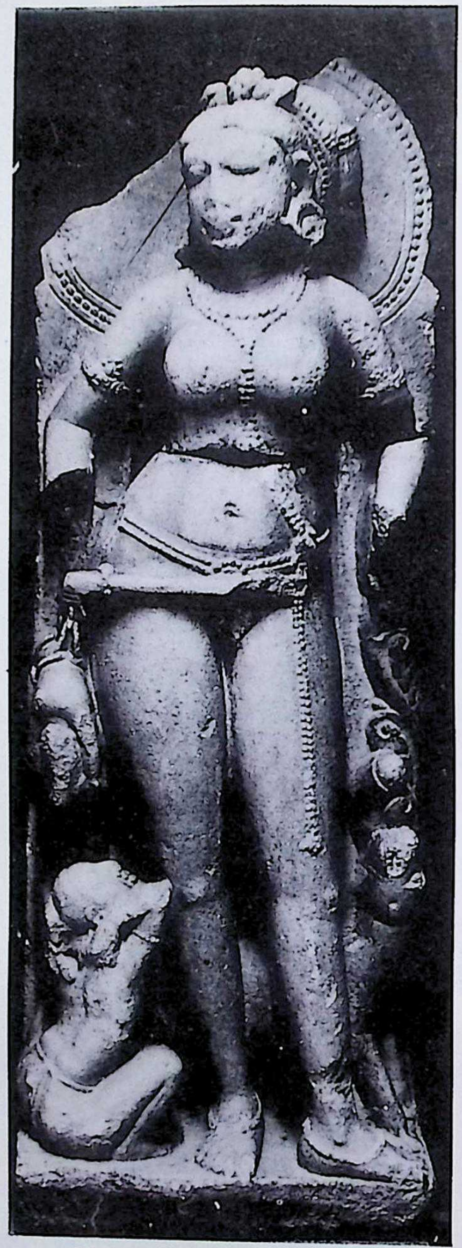
Pl. 160 *Kaumāri*, Karvan,
(Vadodara,Gujarat).



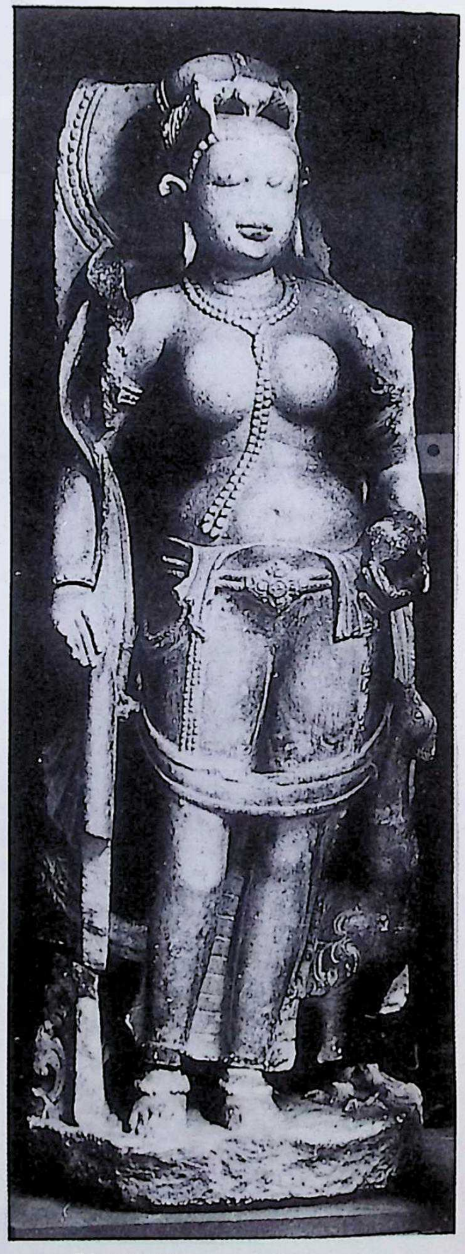
Pl. 161 *Vīṇādhara Śiva*,
Vadaval, (Banaskantha,
Gujarat).



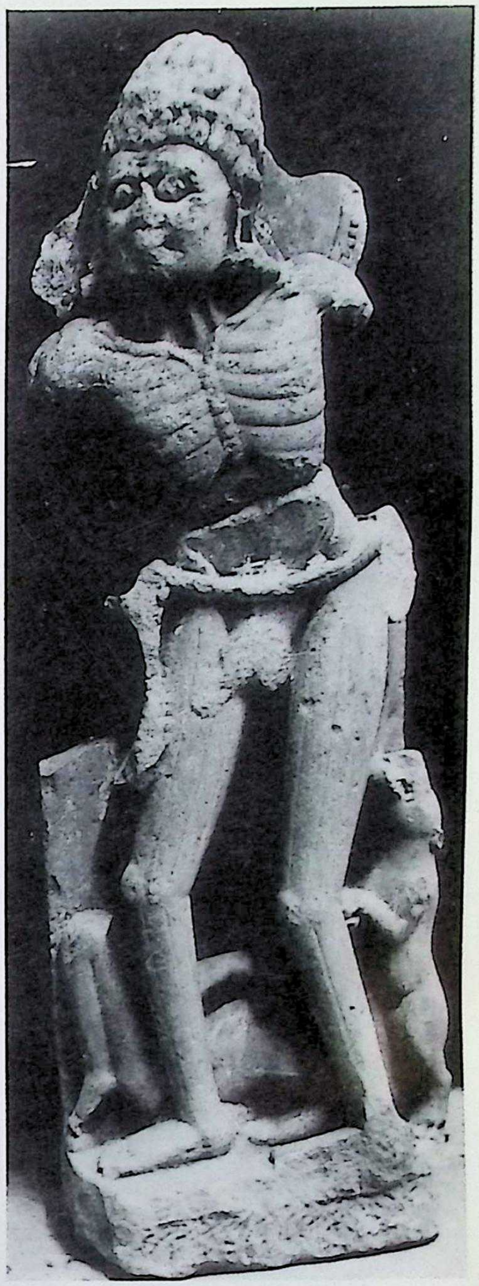
Pl. 162 *Brahmāṇī*, Vadaval,
(Banaskantha, Gujarat).



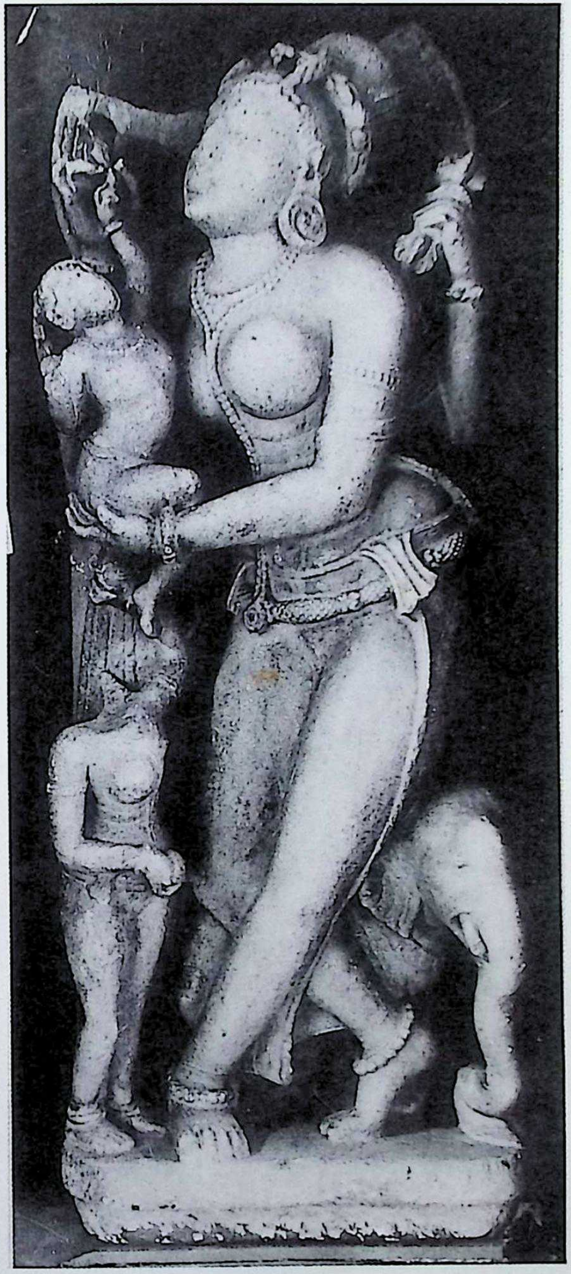
Pl. 163 *Maheśvarī*, Vadaval,
(Banaskantha, Gujarat).



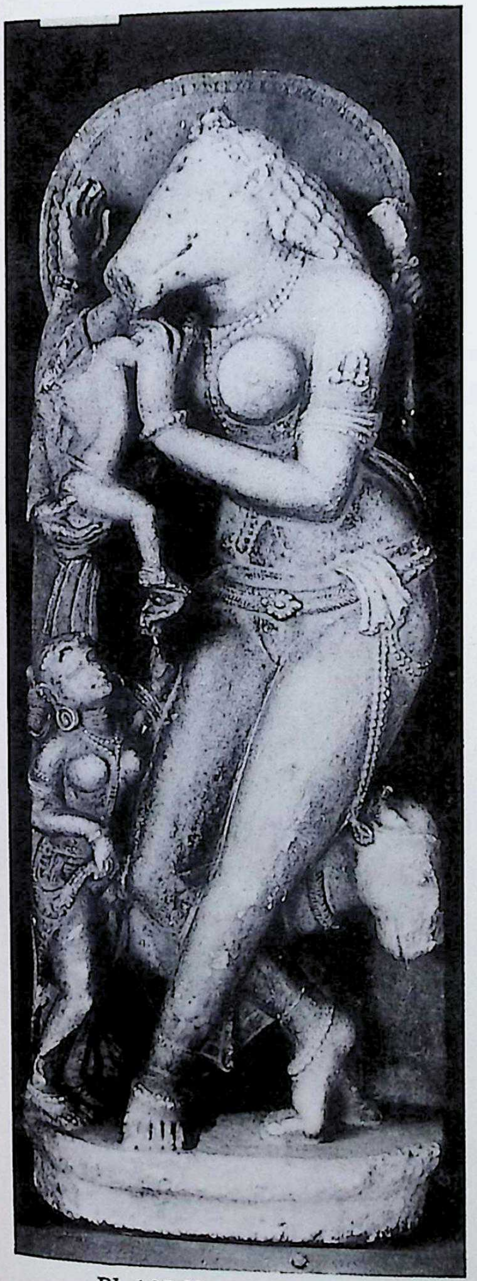
Pl. 164 *Kaumāri*, Vadaval,
(Banaskantha, Gujarat).



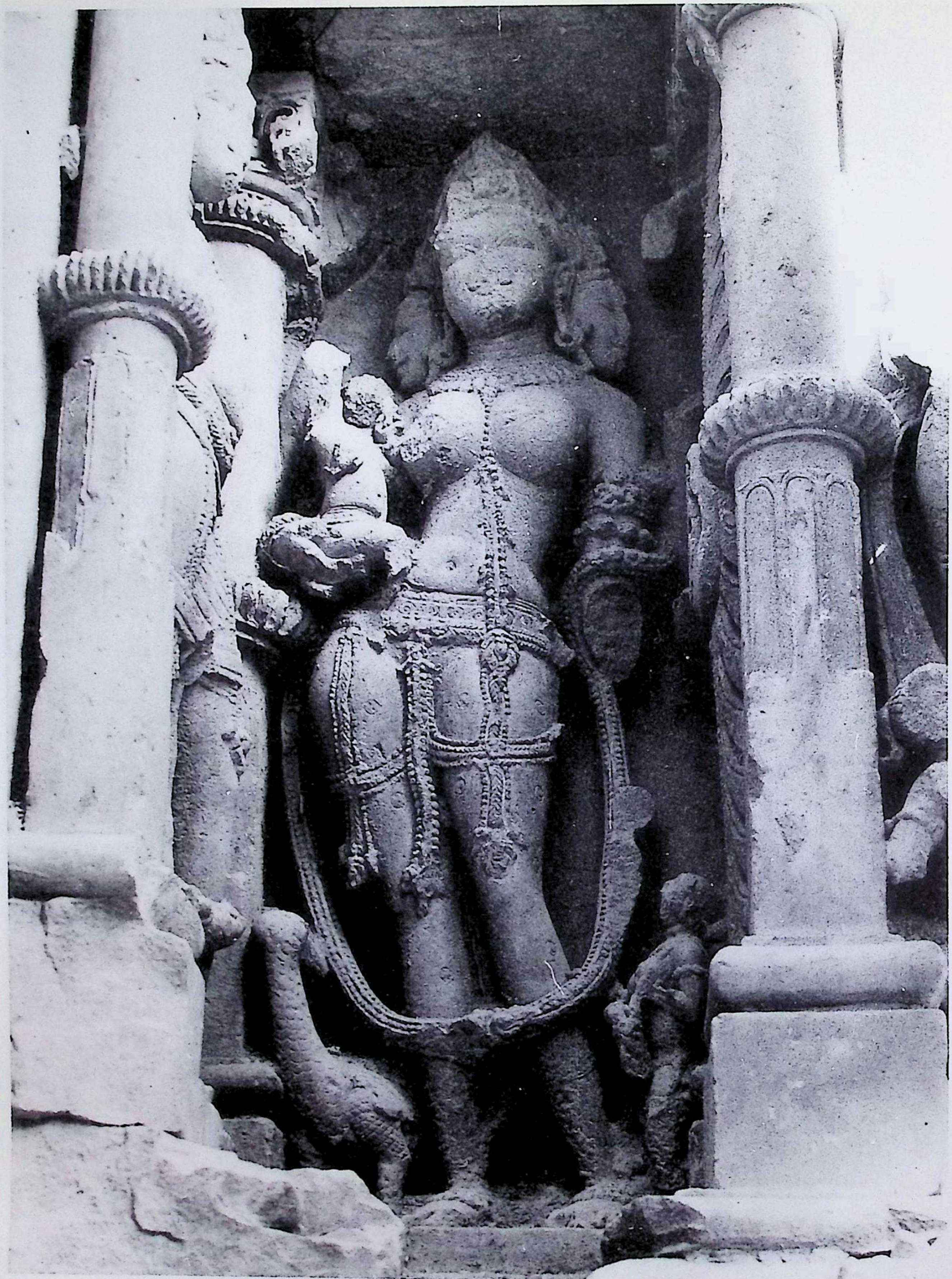
Pl. 167 *Kāla Bhairava*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat).



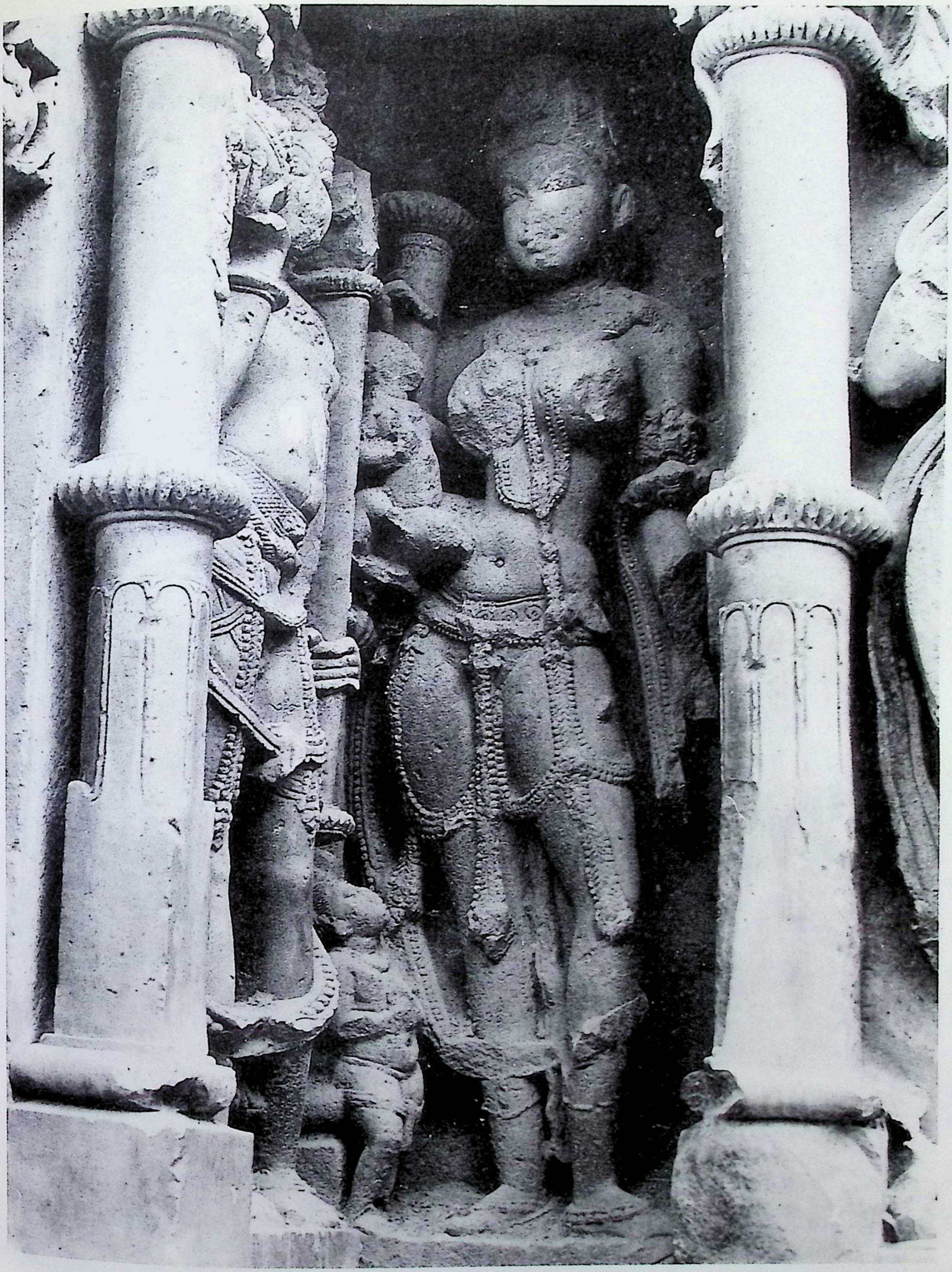
Pl. 166 *Aindri*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat).



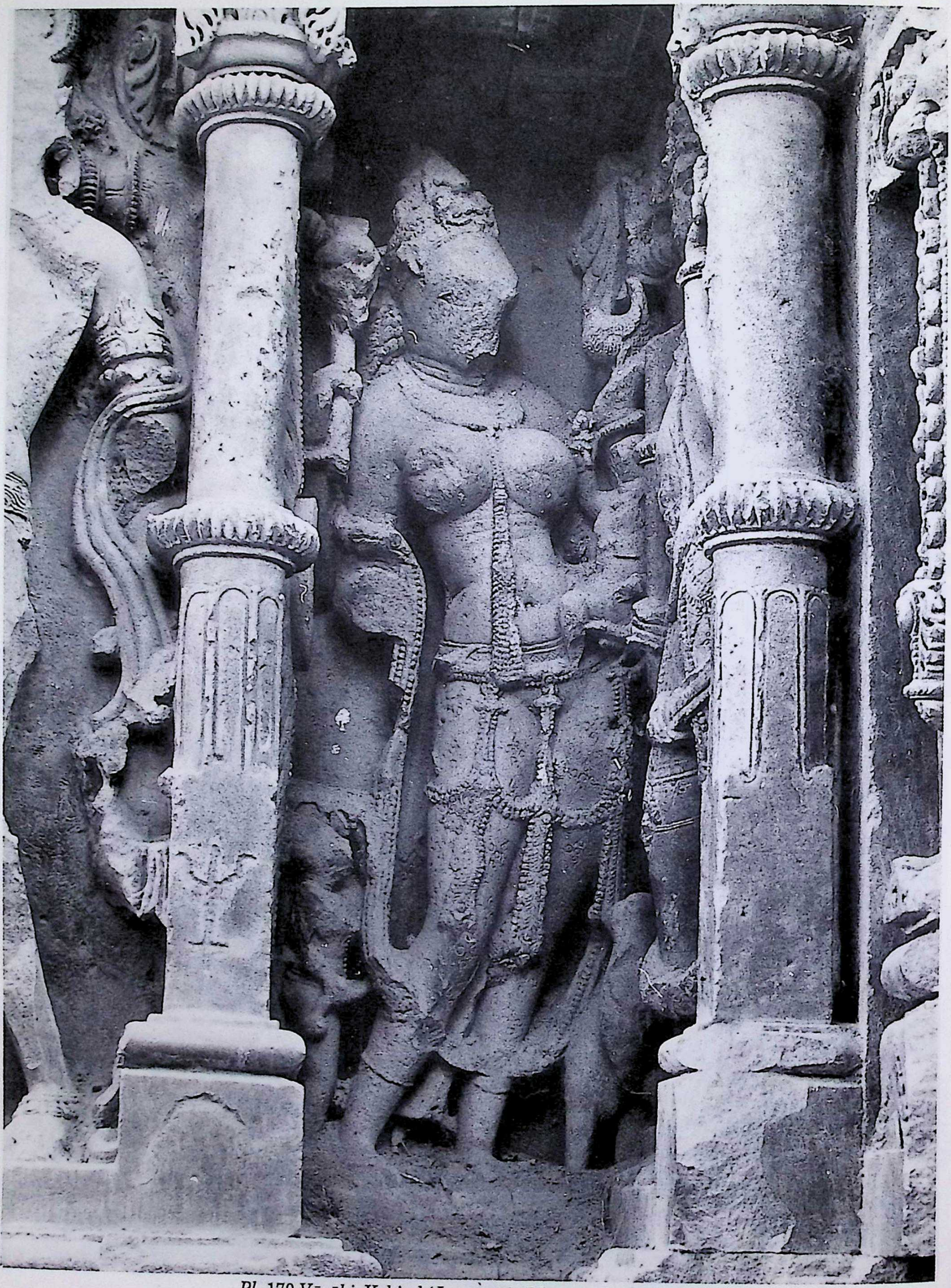
Pl. 165 *Vārāhī*, Vadaval, (Banaskantha, Gujarat).



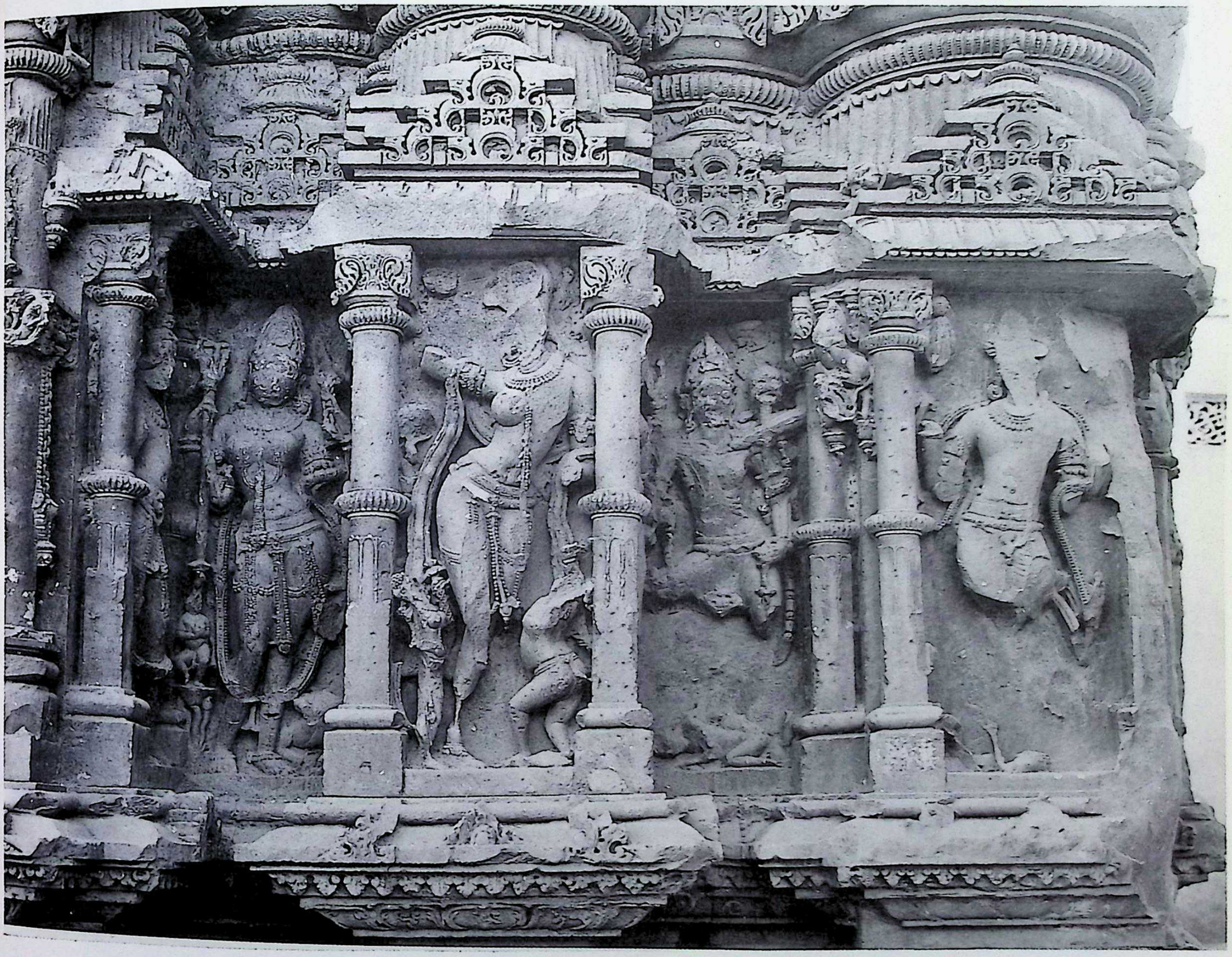
Pl. 168 *Brahmāṇī*, Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan).



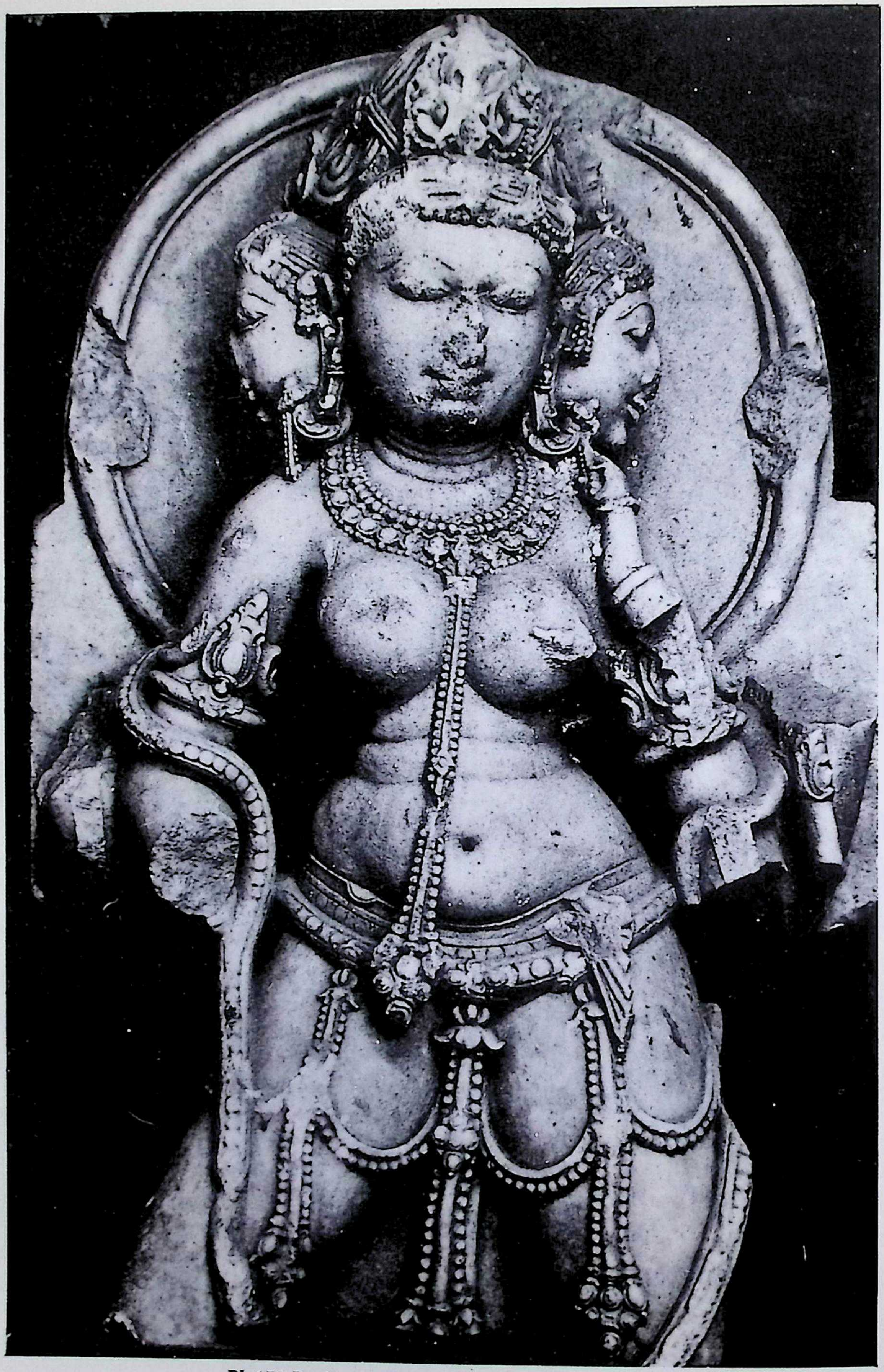
Pl. 169 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan).



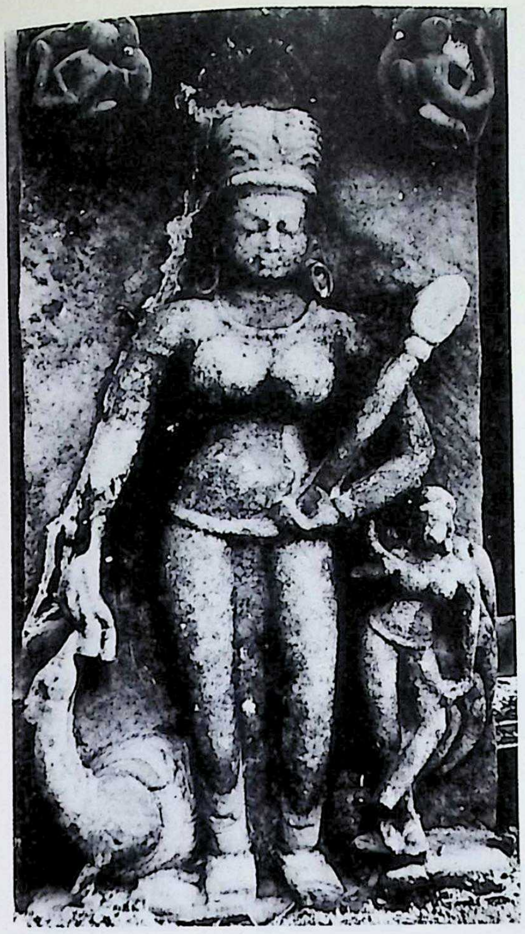
Pl. 170 *Vārāhi,* Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan).



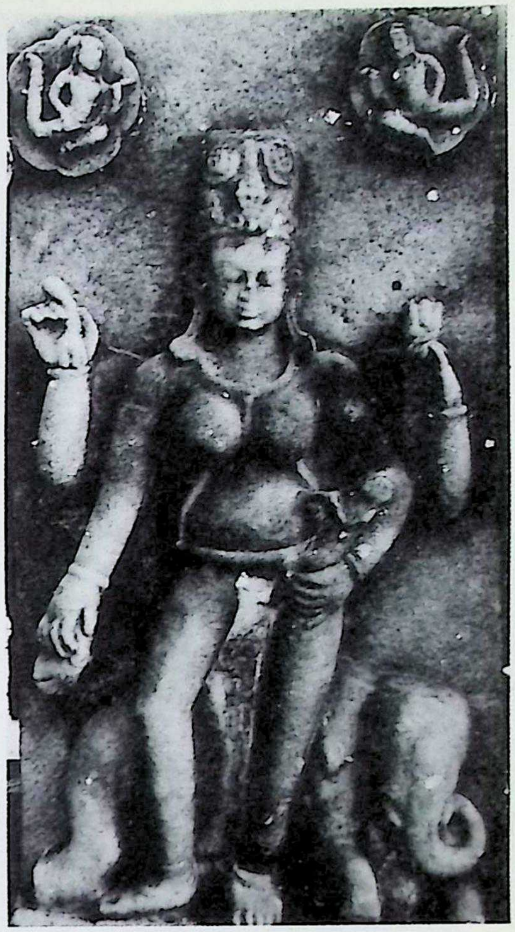
Pl. 171 *Cāmuṇḍā and Kṣemaṅkarī*(?), Kekind (Jasnagar), (Nagaur, Rajasthan).



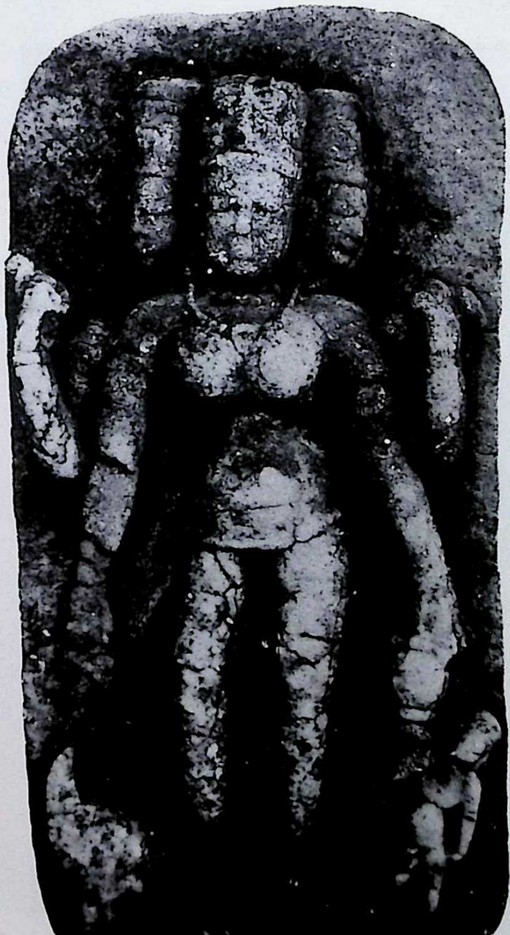
Pl. 172 *Brahmāṇī,* Varaman, (Sirohi, Rajasthan).



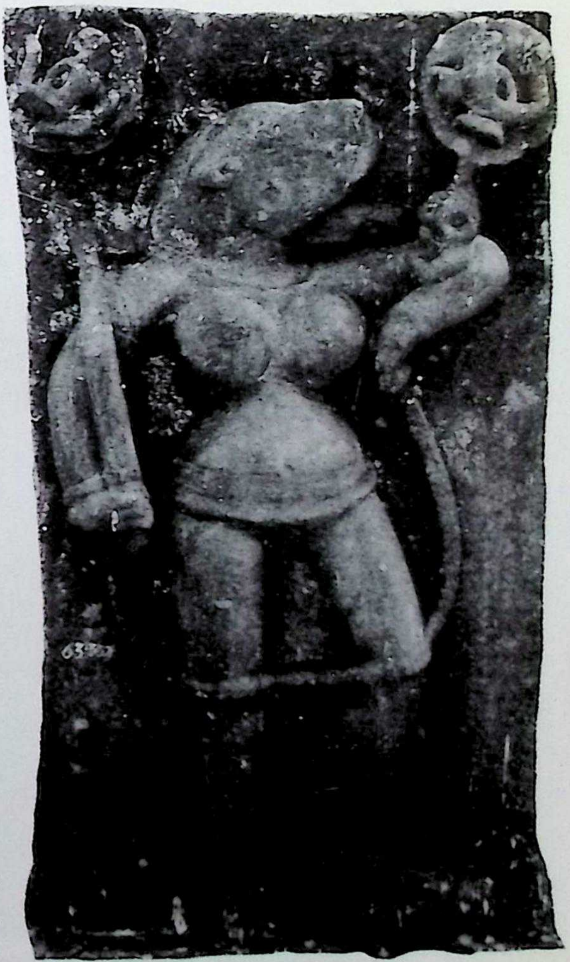
Pl. 173 *Kaumāri*,
Nand-Chand,
(Panna, M.P.)
(group-B).



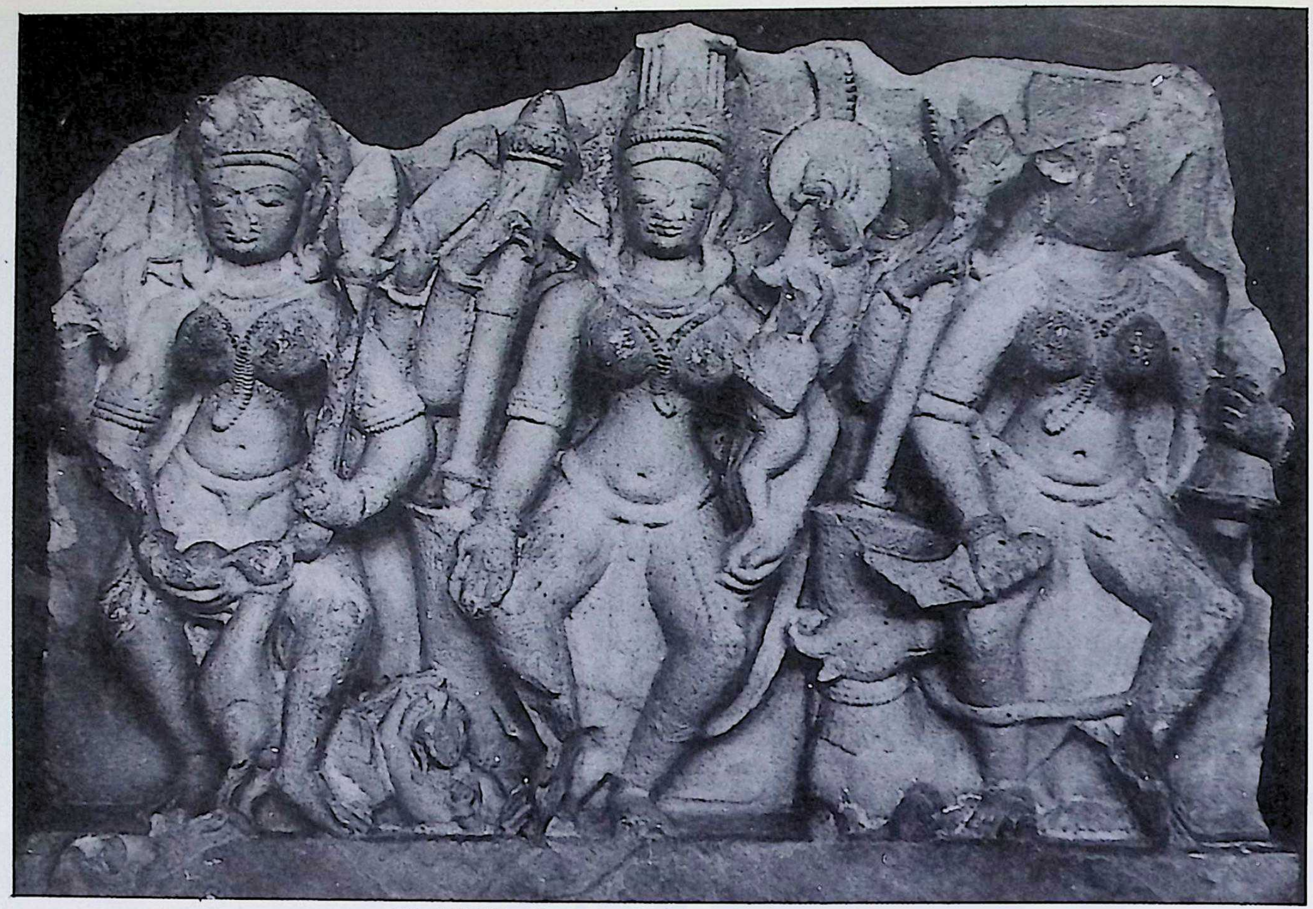
Pl. 174 *Aindri*,
Nand-Chand,
(Panna, M.P.)
(group-B).



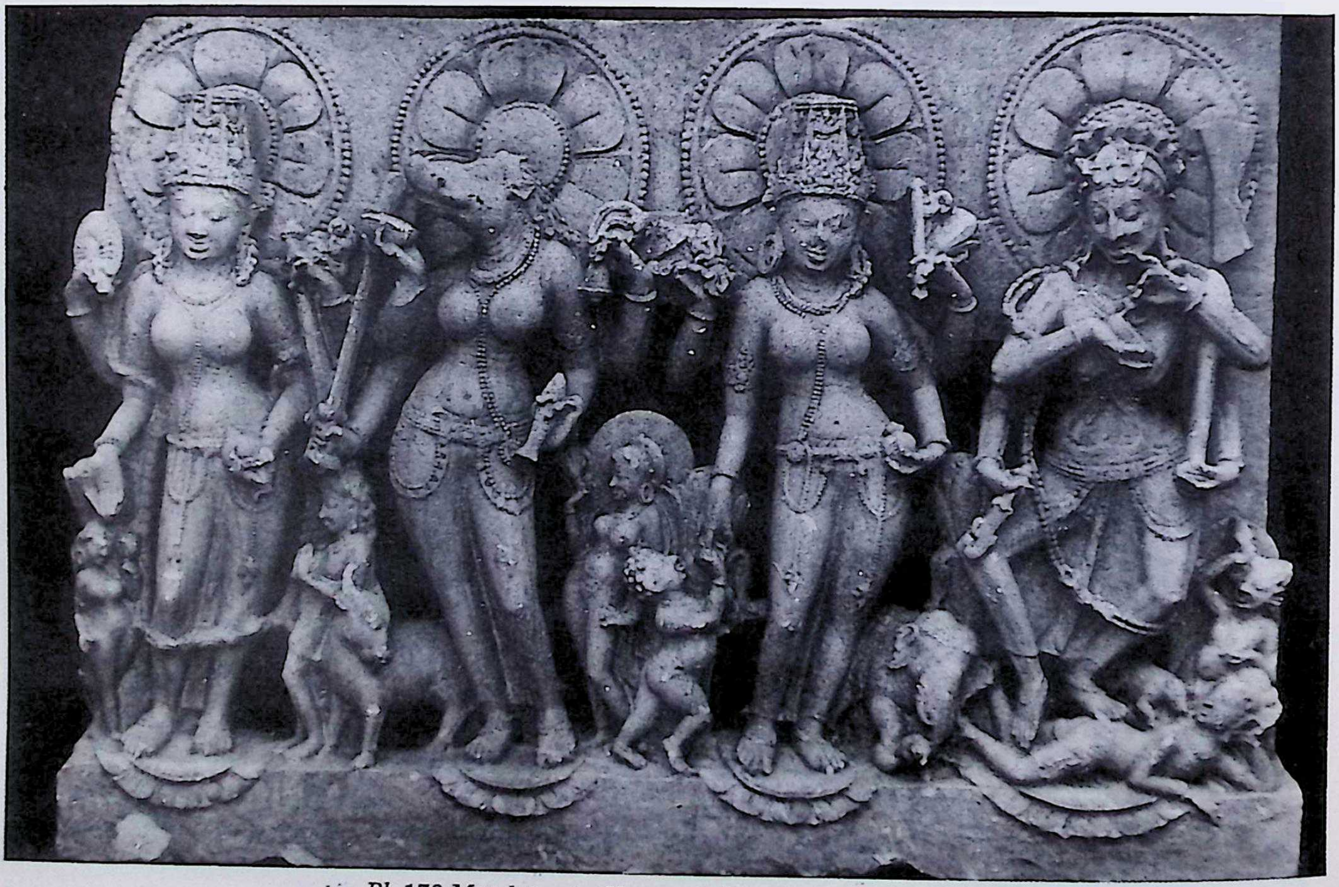
Pl. 175 *Brahmāṇī*,
Nand-Chand,
(Panna, M.P.)
(group-B).



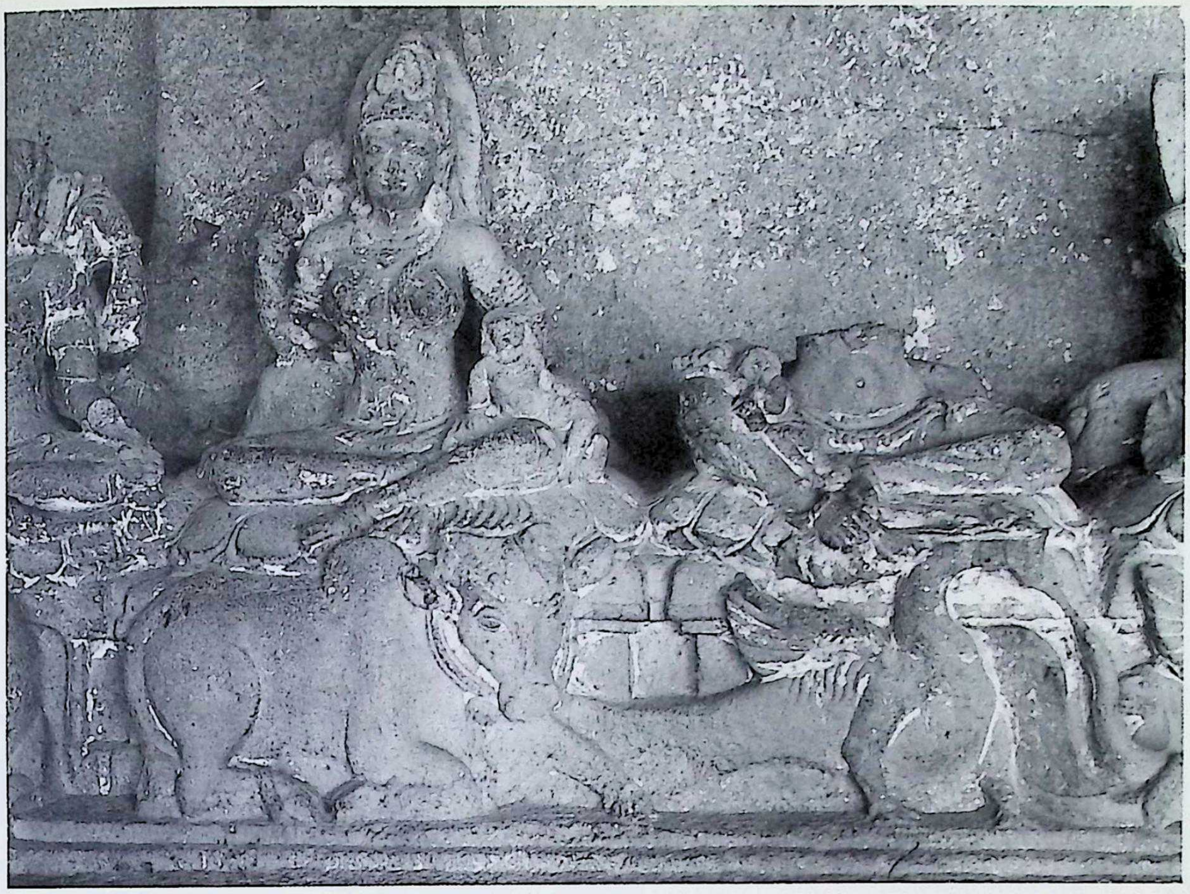
Pl. 176 *Vārāhī*,
Nand-Chand,
(Panna, M.P.)
(group-B).



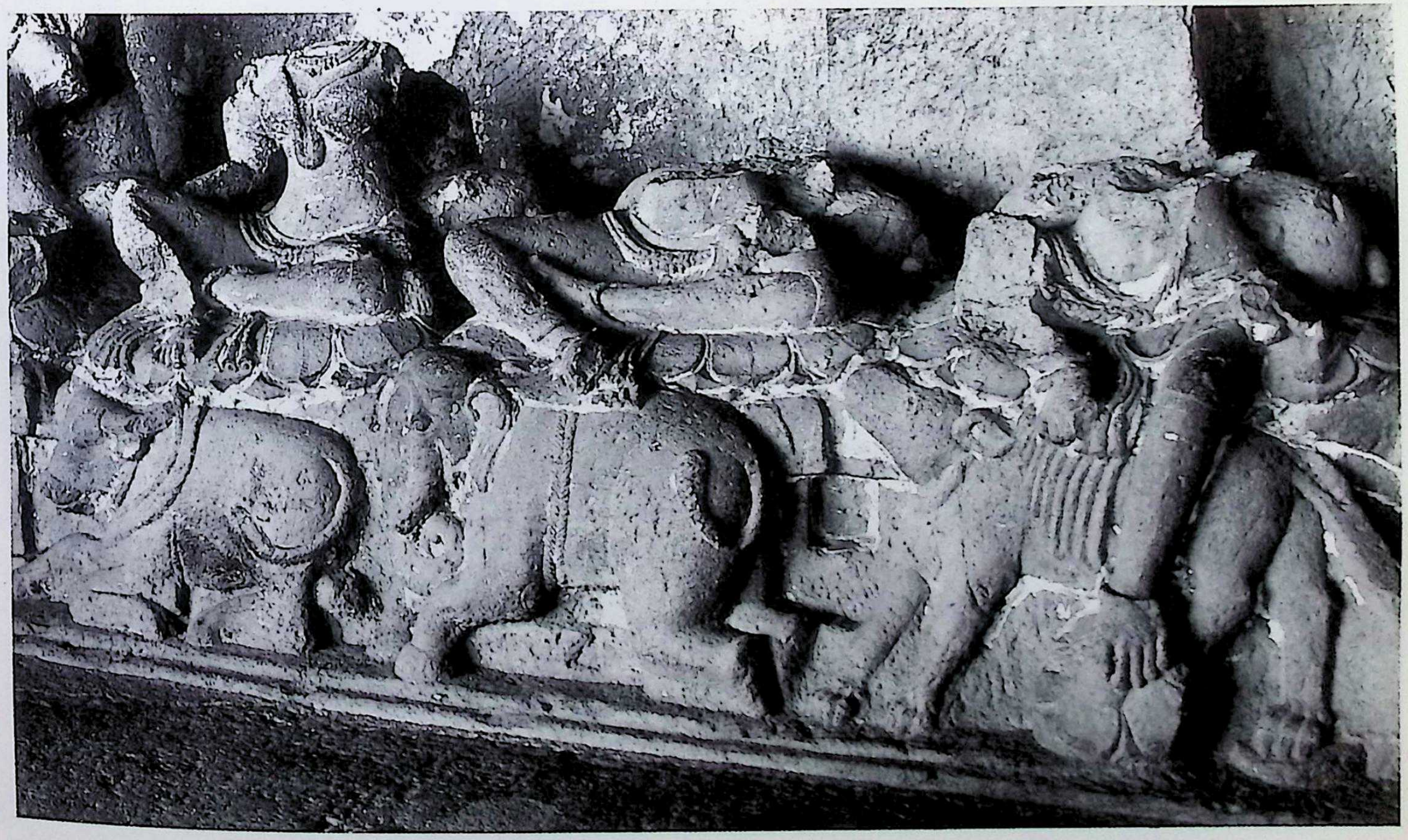
Pl. 177 *Mātṛkā-paṭa*, Kangaroll, (Agra, U.P.).



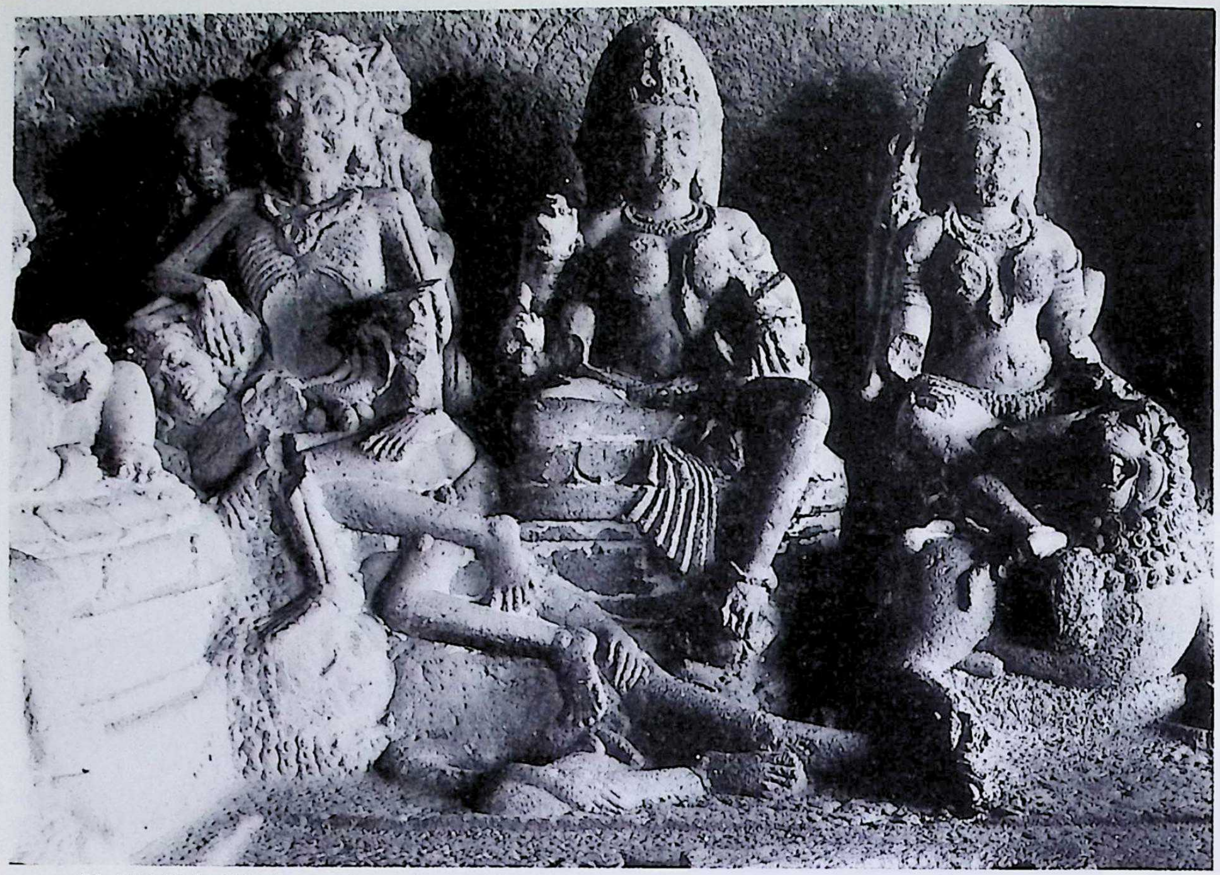
Pl. 178 *Mātṛkā-paṭa*, Kannauj, (Farukhabad, U.P.).



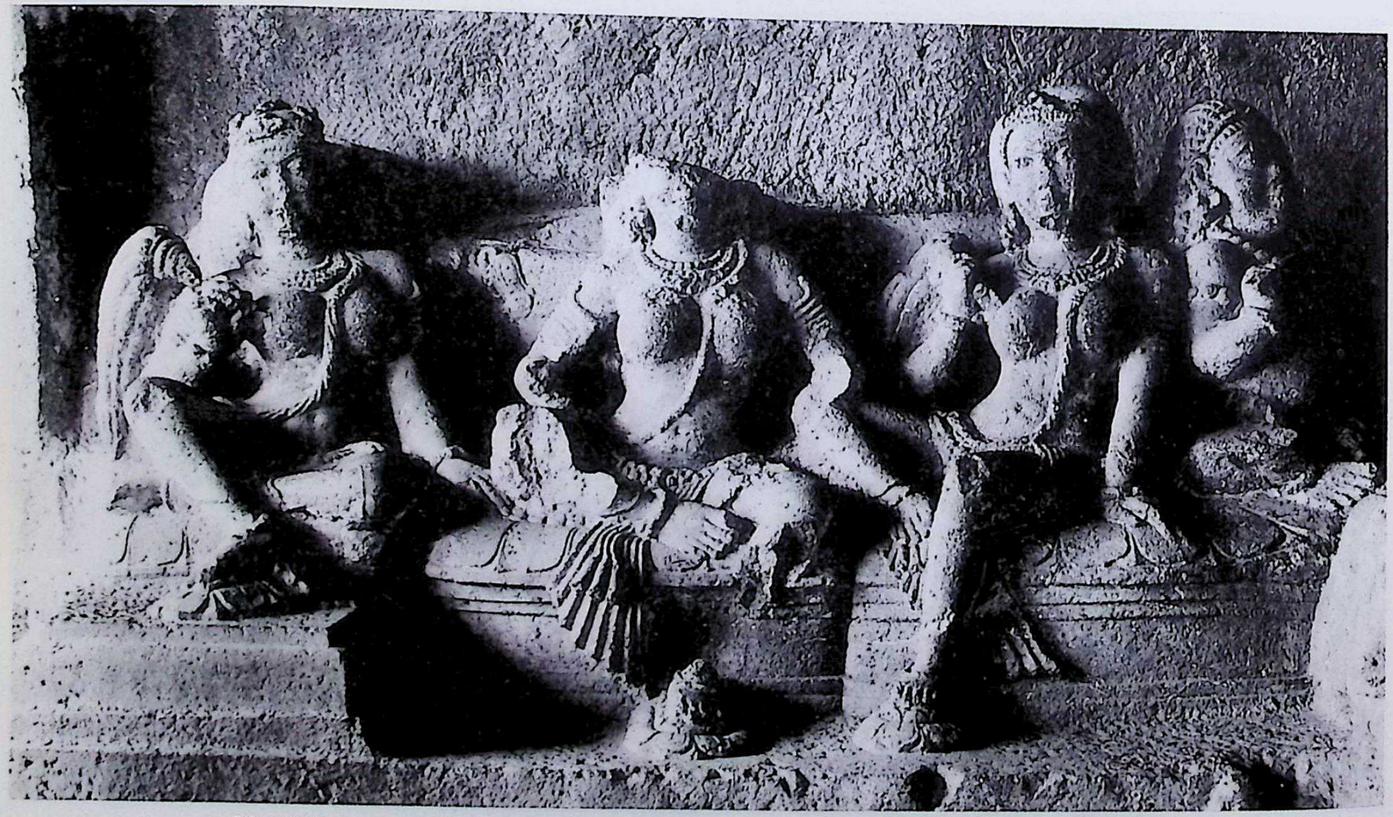
Pl. 179 *Maheśvarī and Kaumāri, Saptamātṛkās (detail),* Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



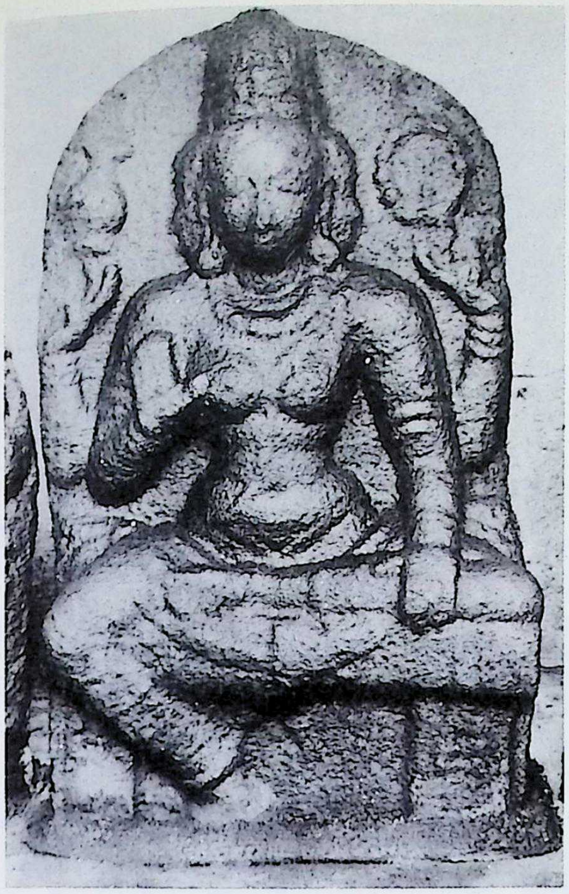
Pl. 180 *Vārāhī, Aindri and Cāmuṇḍā*, Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



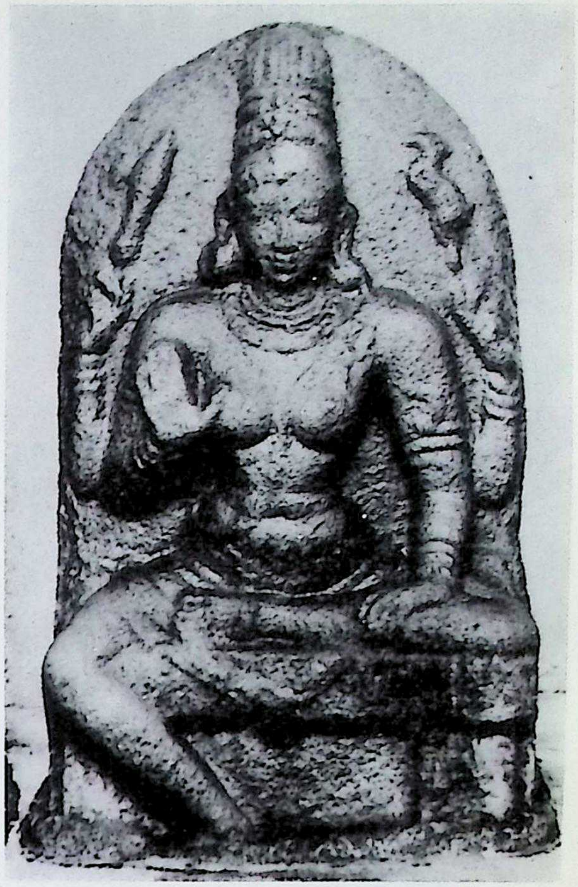
Pl. 181 *Kāla Bhairava, Aparajitā and Durgā,* Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



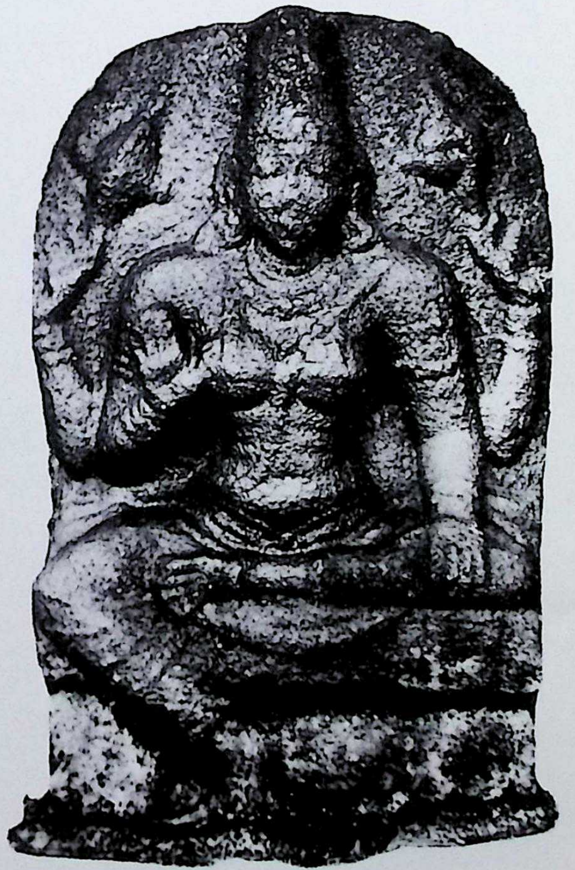
Pl. 182 *The queen and attendants*, Cave-16, Ellora, (Aurangabad, Maharashtra).



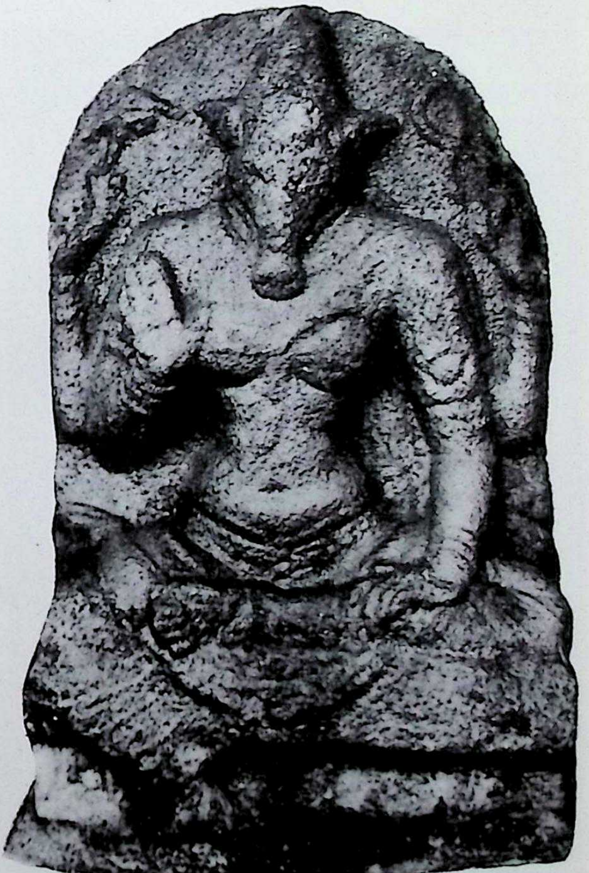
Pl. 183
Brahmāṇī,
Tiruppunturutti,
(Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu).



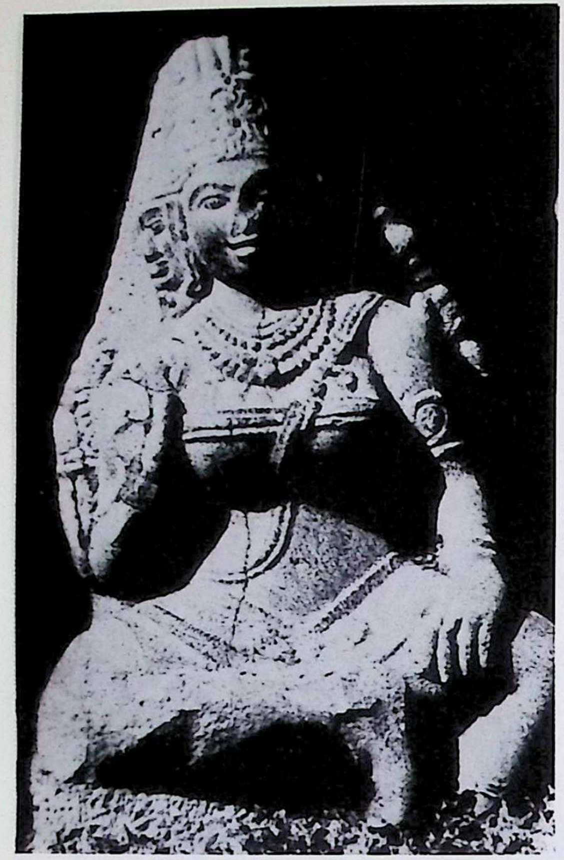
Pl. 184 *Maheśvarī*,
Tiruppunturutti,
(Tanjavur,
Tamil Nadu).



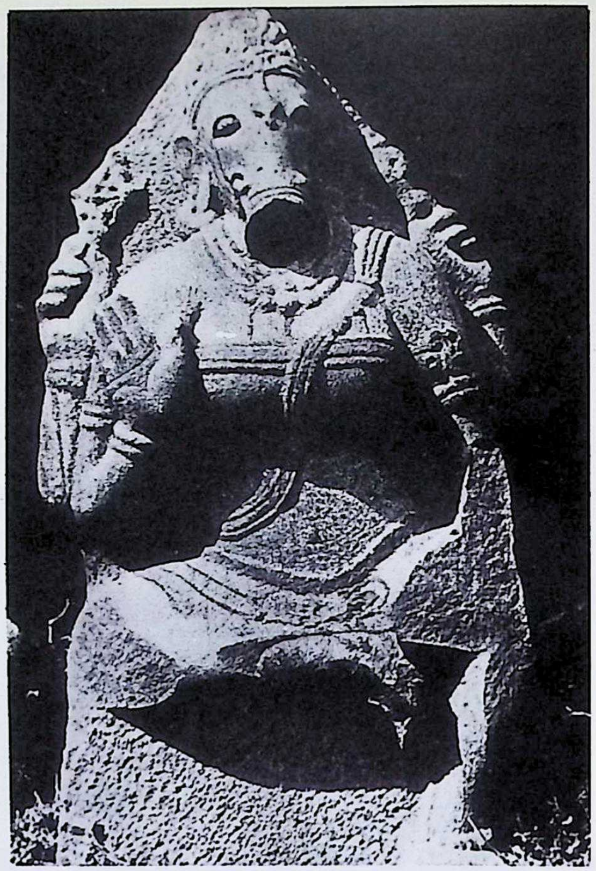
Pl. 185 *Vaiṣṇavī*, Tiruppunturutti,
(Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu).



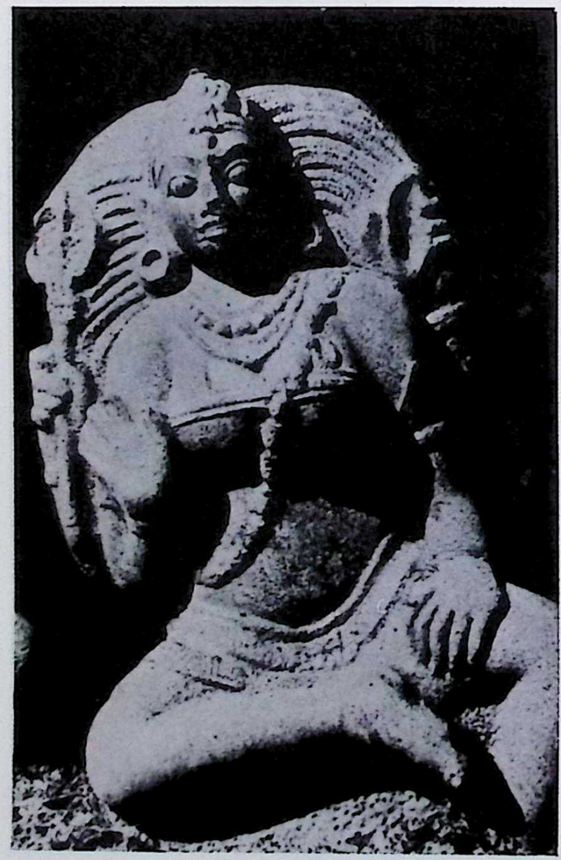
Pl. 186 *Vārāhī*, Tiruppunturutti,
(Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu).



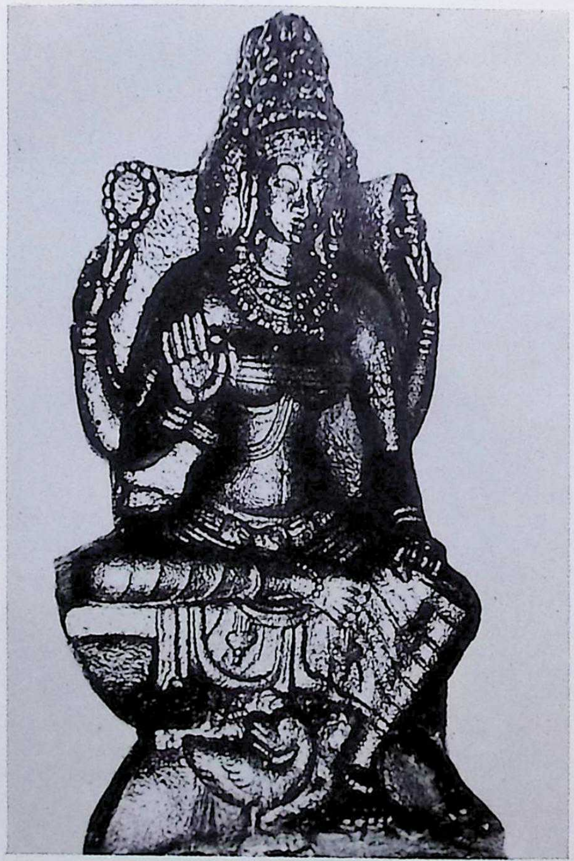
Pl. 187 *Brahmāṇī*, Perunkanchi,
(North Arcot, Tamil Nadu).



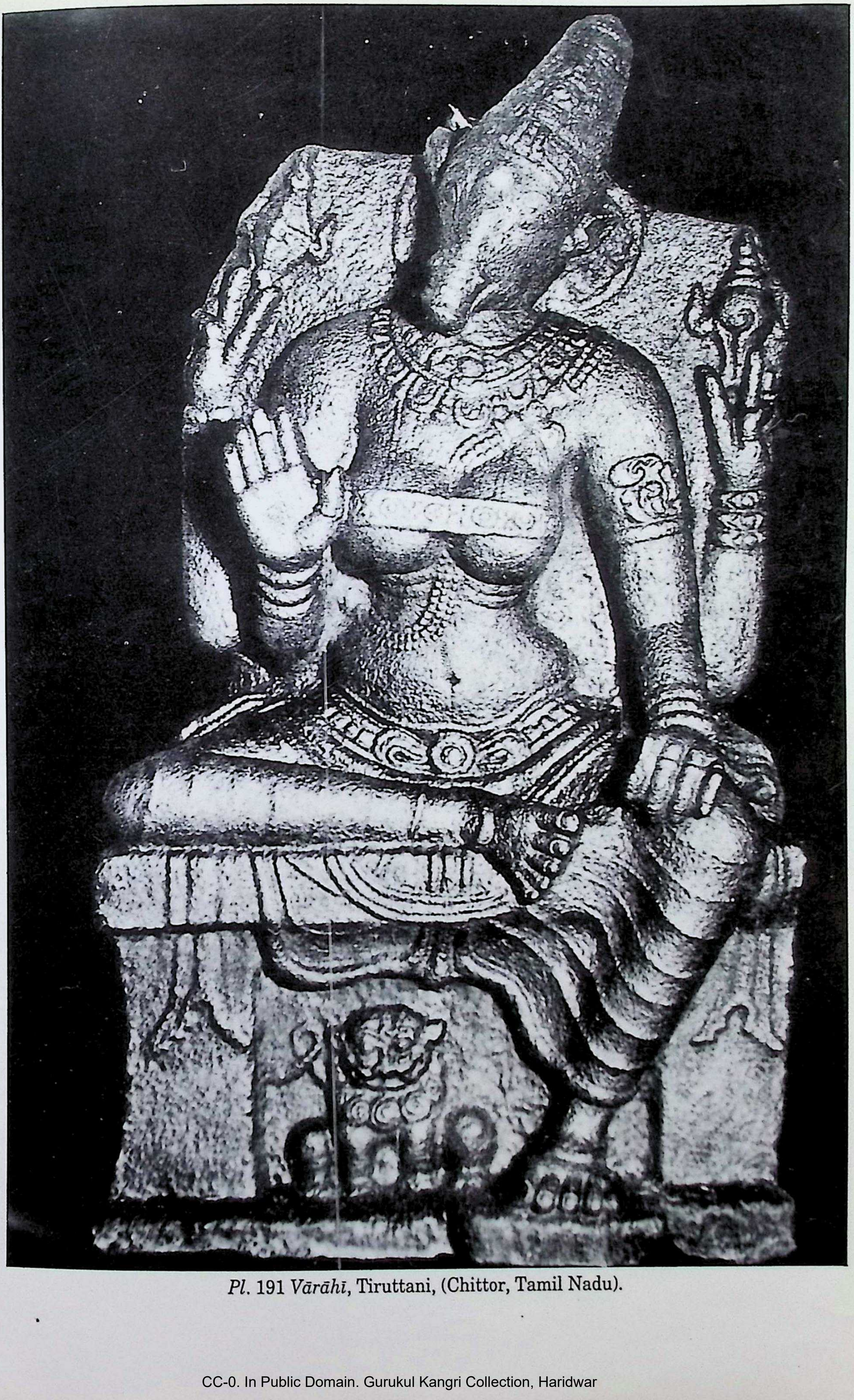
Pl. 188 *Vārāhī*, Perunkanchi,
(North Arcot, Tamil Nadu).



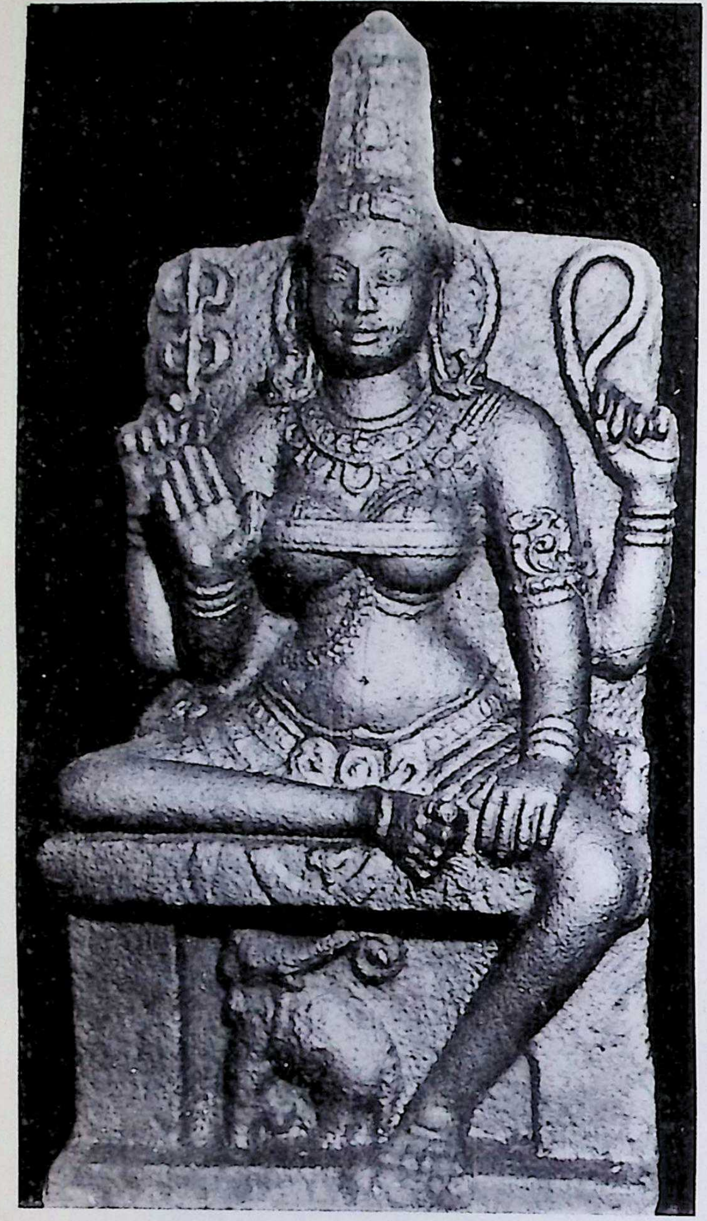
Pl. 189 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Perunkanchi,
(North Arcot, Tamil Nadu).



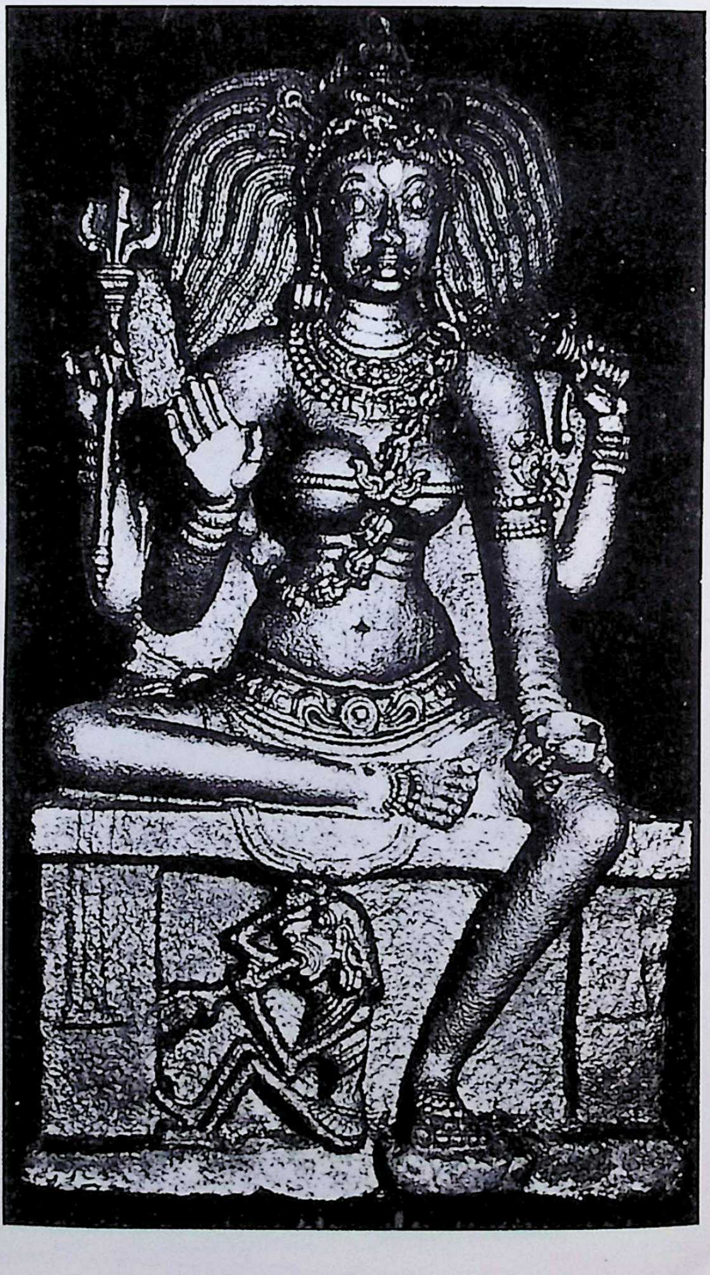
Pl. 190 *Brahmāṇī*, Tiruttani,
(Chittor, Tamil Nadu).



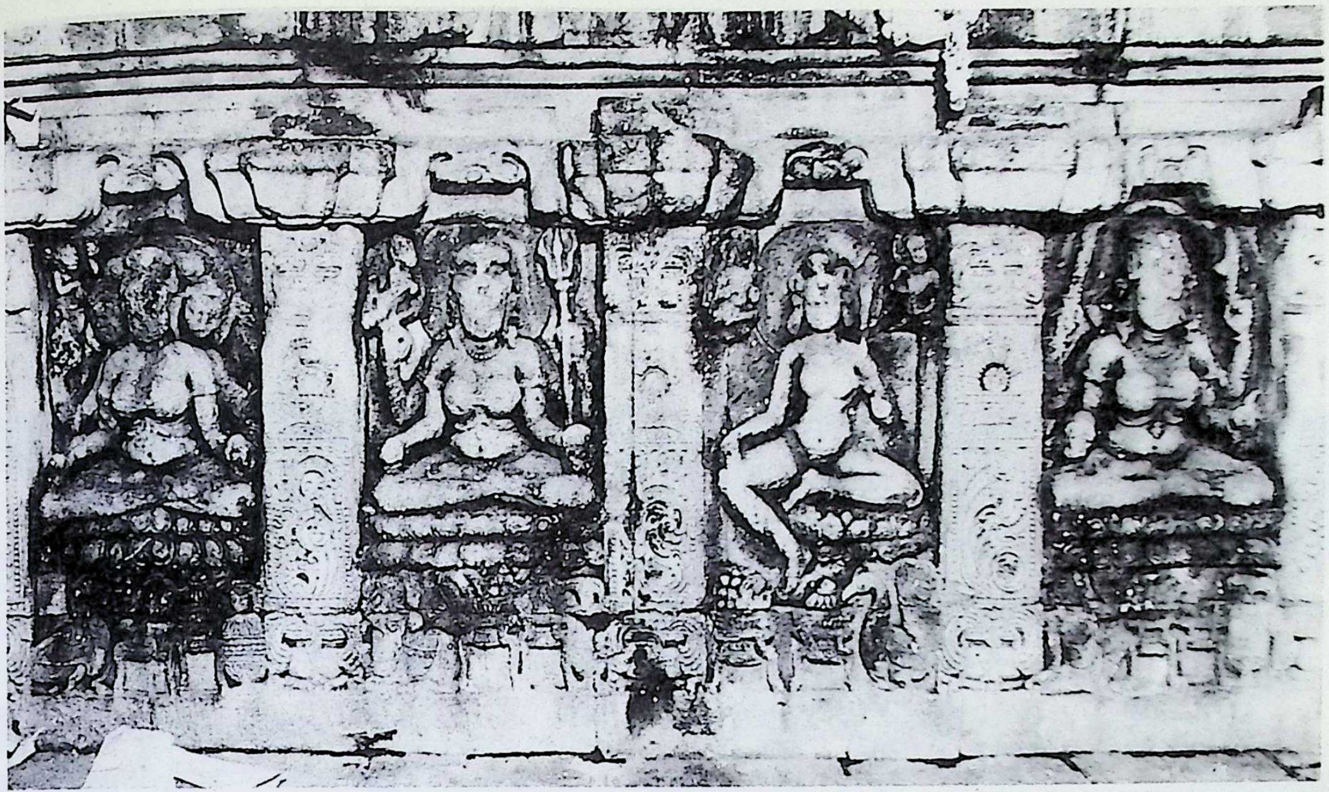
Pl. 191 *Vārāhī*, Tiruttani, (Chittor, Tamil Nadu).



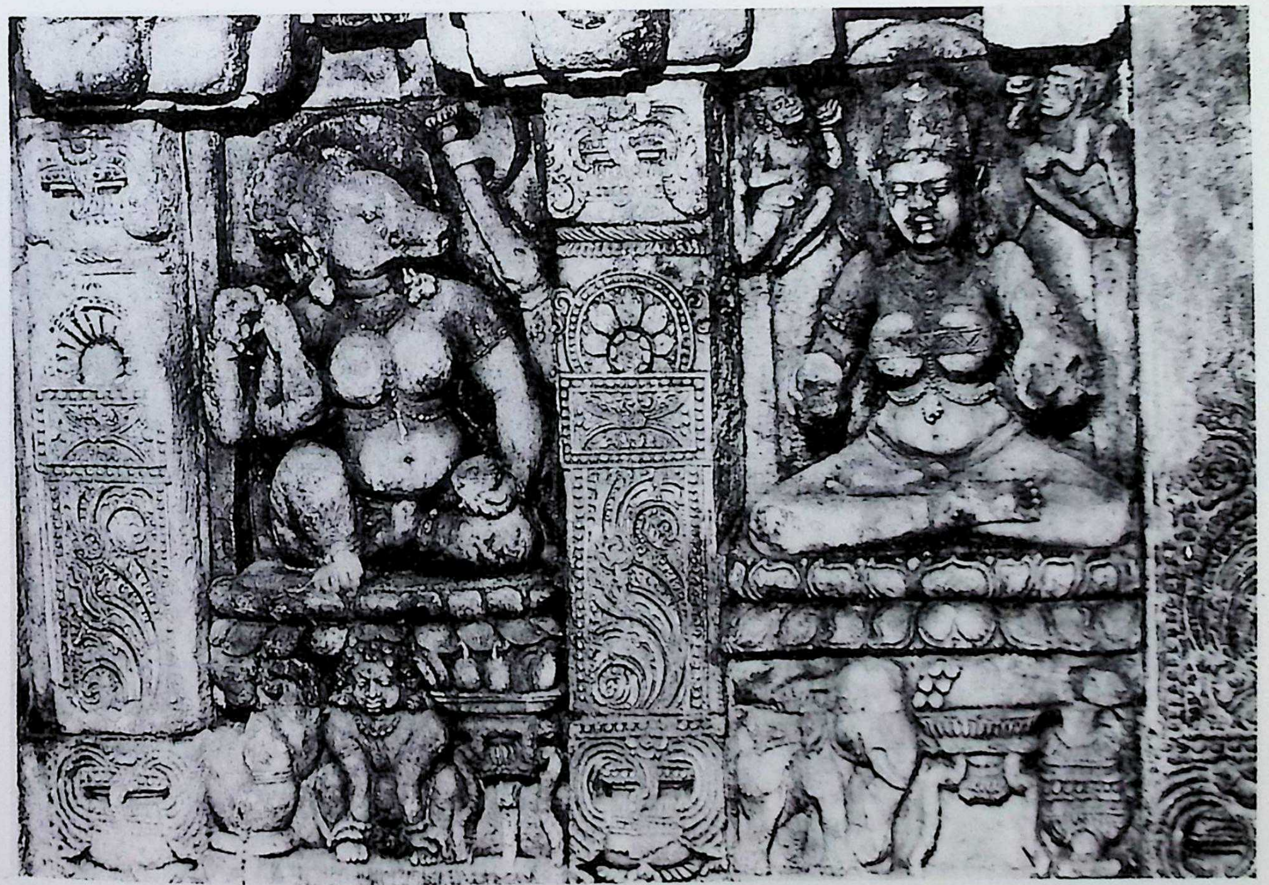
Pl. 192 *Aindri*, Tiruttani, (Chittor, Tamil Nadu).



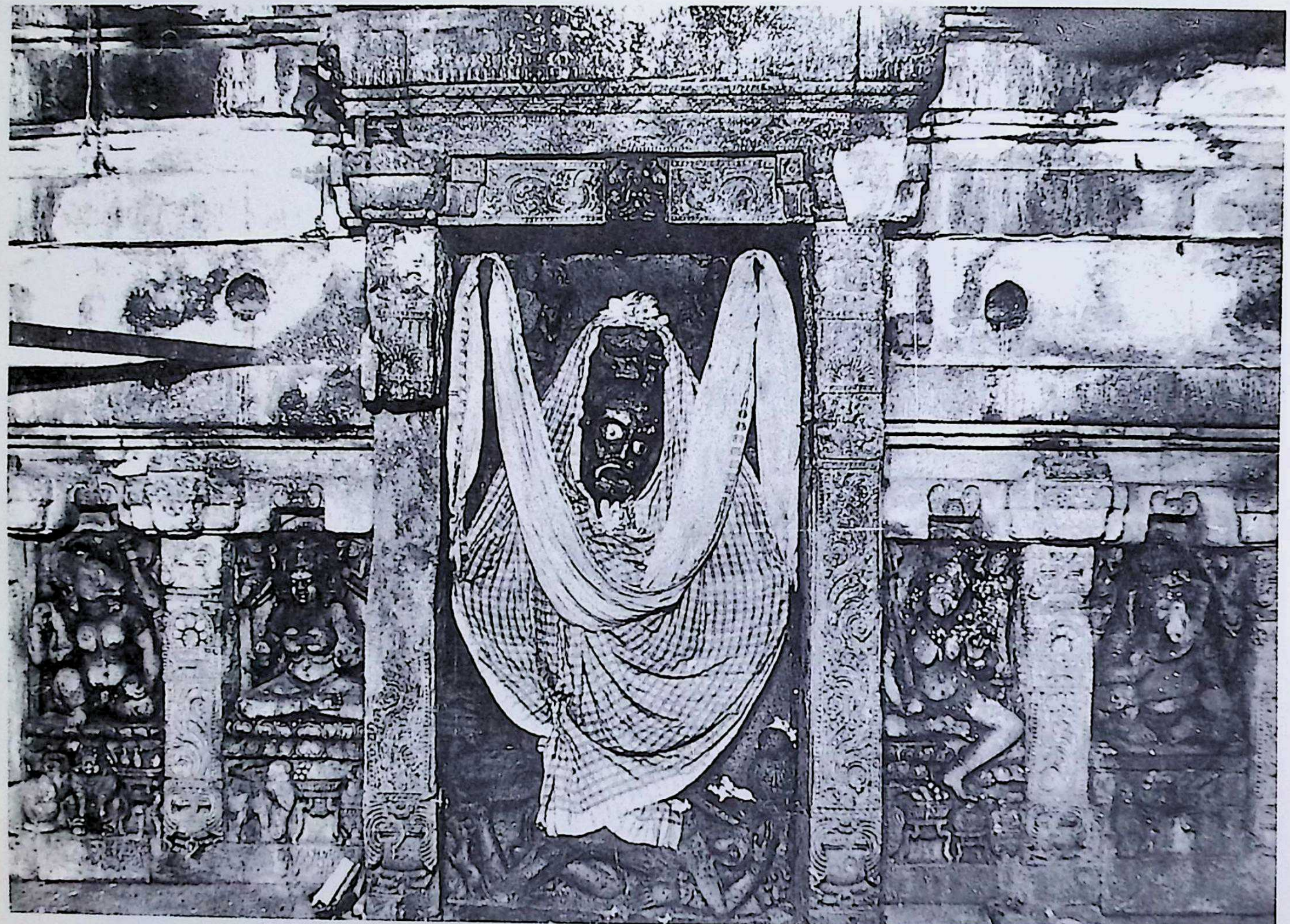
Pl. 193 *Cāmuṇḍā*, Tiruttani, (Chittor, Tamil Nadu).



Pl. 194 *Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī and Vaiṣṇavī*, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa).



Pl. 195 *Vārāhī and Aindri*, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa).



Pl. 196 *Vārāhī, Aindri, Cāmuṇḍā, Kauśīkī, Ganeśa*, Bhuvaneswar, (Puri, Orissa).

पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कां

Bibliography

Agrawala, R.C., "The Aṣṭamātṛkās of Marwar", in *IHQ*, 2, Vol. XXIX, 1953. Dec., No. 4.

———, "A Unique Mātṛkā Relief from Rajasthan", in *JBRS*, XLIII, March-June, 1957.

———, "Some Unpublished Sculptures from South Western Rajasthan", in *LK*. 6, 1956.

———, "Some More Unpublished Sculptures from Rajasthan", in *LK,* 10, 1961.

———, "A Rare Image of Varahi in the British Museum", in *OA*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1963.

———, "Fish and Varahi in Ancient Indian Sculpture", in *OHRJ*, Vol. XII, 1964, No. 1.

———, "More Sculptures form Amjhara, Rajasthan", in *AA*, XII, 1965.

———, "Kṛttikā Cult in Early Indian Sculpture", in *LK,* 14, 1969.

———, "Mother and Child Sculptures from Samalaji and Rájasthan", in *BBMPG*, Vol. XXIII, 1971.

———, "Mātṛkā Relief in Early Indian Art", in *EW*, Vol. 2, No. 1-2, March-June, 1971.

Agrawala, Vasudeva Sharan, "Goddess Shashti on the Yaudheya Coins", in *JNSI*, Vol. V, 1943, part I.

———, "A Note on the God Naigameṣa", in *JUPHS*, Vol. XX, Jan. & Dec., 1947.

———, "Presiding Deity of Child Birth Amongst the Jains", in *JA*, II.IV.

———, *A Catalogue of Brāhmanical Images in Mathura Art*, in Uttar Pradesh Historical Society, Lucknow, 1951.

———, *Harṣacarita — Ek Samaskārika Adhyayana*, (Hindi), Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna, 1953.

———, *Vāmana Purāṇa — A Study*, Prithivi Prakasan, Varanasi, 1964.

———, *The Devī Māhātmyam*, All India Kashiraj Trust, Banaras, 1963.

———, *Studies in Indian Art*, Viśwavidyālaya Prakāśan, Varanasi, 1965.

———, *Ancient Indian Folk Cults*, Indian Civilization Series. No. VII, Prithivi Prakashan, Varanasi, 1970.

Altekar, A.S., *Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1962, (first pub. 1938).

Arunachalam, M., "The Sapta Mātṛkā Cult", in *BITC*, University of Madras, Madras, 1977, 3-4.

Asher, Frederick M., *The Art of Eastern India — 300 to 800 A.D.*, Delhi, 1980.

———, "Historical and Political Allegory in Gupta Art", in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. by Bardwell L. Smith, Delhi, 1984.

Bajpai, K.D., *Sagar — Through the Ages*, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology, University of Sagar, Sagar, 1964.

Banerjea, Jitendra Nath, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1974, (first pub. 1941).

———, "Some Early Literary and Archaeological Data About Tāntrism", in *Essays in Indian Art, Religion and Society*, Indian History Congress Golden Jubilee Year Publication Series, Vol. I, ed. by Krishna Mohan Shrimali, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1987.

———, *Purāṇic and Tāntric Religion : Early Phase*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1966.

Bangdel, S. Lain, "The Early Sculptures of Nepal", in Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1982.

Barthes, Roland, "The Rhetoric of the Image", in *Image-Music-Text*, ed. by S. Heath, Fontana, London, 1977.

Barrett, Douglas, *The Temple of Virattaneśvara at Tiruttani*, Bhulabhai Memorial Institute, Bombay, 1958.

Baskaran, S.T., "The Sapta Mātṛkā of Perunkanchi", in *LK*, 17, 1974.

Berkson, Carmel, "An Approach Towards Examining Style in the Cave Temples", in *Rupa Pratirupa*, Alice Boner Commemoration Volume, ed. by Bettina Baumer, Biblia Impex Private Ltd., New Delhi, 1982.

Bhattacharji, Sukumari, *The Indian Theogony : A Comparative Study of Indian Mythology from the Vedas to the Purāṇas,* Firma KLM Private Ltd., 1978, (first edn. 1978).

Bhandarkar, R.G., *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1965.

Bhide, V.V., *A Concise Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Chitra Sala Press, Poona City, (first edn.), 1926.

Bolen, Carol Radcliffe, "A Late 8th Century Matrka Set at Aihole", in *Dimensions of Art, Pupul Jayakar Seventy*, 2 Vols., ed. by Lokesh Chandra and Jyotindra Jain, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1986.

Chandra, Moti, "Studies in the cult of the Mother-Goddess", in *BPWMWI*, Bombay, No. 12, 1973.

Chandra, Pramod, *The Sculpture of India 3000 BC—1300 AD*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1985.

Chattopadhyaya, Debiprasad, *What is Living and What is Dead in Indian Philosophy*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1977 (first edn. 1976).

———, *Lokāyata : A study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981 (first edn. 1959).

———, *Indian Philosophy : A Popular Introduction*, People's Publishing House, 1986, (first edn. 1964).

Chattopadhyaya, Sudhakar, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Sankaracarya*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1970.

Chemburkar, Jaya, "Kāla Śakti of Īśvara in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa", in *JOI*, Baroda, Vol. XXVI, Sept. 1976, No. I.

Coburn, B. Thomas, *Devī-Māhātmya : The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1984.

Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Yakshas*, 2 Vols., Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1971 (first pub.1928-31).

Cunningham, Alexander, *Bhilsa Topes; or Buddhist Monuments of Central India*, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1966, (first pub. 1854).

———, *Archaeological Survey Report*, Vol. XXI.

Crooke, William, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of North India*, 2 Vols., Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1968 (reprint).

Dasgupta Shashi Bhusan, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Firma KLM Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1976.

Dasgupta Surendernath, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, 5 Vols., Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1973.

Dash, M.P., "Worship of Sapta Mātṛkās and their Representation in Orissan Temples", in *OHRJ*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1962.

Das, H.C., and Panda D., *Tāntrism : A Study of the Yogini Cult*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1981.

Danielou, Alain, *Hindu Polytheism*, Bollingen Series, no. 73, Pantheon Books, New York, 1964.

Dehejia, Vidya, *Yoginī Temples and Cult*, National Museum, New Delhi, 1986.

Deva, Krishna, "Are there Regional Variations in the Plastic Representation of Kṛṣṇalīlā", in *Vaiṣṇavism in Indian Arts and Culture*, ed. by Ratan Parimoo, Books & Books, New Delhi, 1987.

Dhavalikar, M.K., "The Origin of Sapta Mātṛkās", in *BDCRT*, 1960-61.

Dikshit, S.K., *The Mother-Goddess (A Study Regarding the Origin of Hinduism)*, The International Book Service, Poona, undated (probably 1954).

Divarakaran, Odile, "Durgā the Great Goddess — Meanings and Forms in the Early Period", in *Discourses on Śiva*, ed. by Michael W. Meister, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1984, Fergusson James and Brugess James.

———, *Cave Temples of India*, Oriental Books, Delhi, 1969 (first pub. in 1880).

Fleet, John Faithfull, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, Indological Book House,Varanasi, 1963 (first pub. Calcutta, 1888).

Frazer, Sir James George, *The Golden Bough*, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1935.

Gajjar, N. Irene, *Ancient Indian Art and the West*, D.B. Taraporevala Sons and Co., Bombay, 1971.

Garg, R.S., *Śākta Pratimāyen* (Hindi), Catalogue, Central Museum, Indore, 1980.

——, *Śaiva Pratimāyen* (Hindi), Catalogue, Central Museum, Indore, 1980.

Getty, Alice, *Gaṇeśa : A Monograph on the Elephant-faced God*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1936.

Goetz, H., "The Kailāsa of Ellora and the Chronology of Rastrakuta Art", in *ABA*, Vol. XV, 1/2, 1952.

Gonda, Jan, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1966.

Gorakshakar, Sadashiv, "A Harihara Image form Jogesvari and the Problem of Dating Gharapuri (Elephanta)", in *Madhu*, ed. by M.S. Nagaraja Rao, Delhi, 1987.

——, "The Parel Mahādeva Reassessed and the Newly Discovered Images from Parel", in *LK*, 20, 1982.

Goyal, S.R., *A Religious History of Ancient India*, 2 Vols., Kusumanjali Prakasan, Meerut, 1986.

Griswold, H.D., *The Religion of Ṛgveda*, Bombay, 1923.

Gupta, Parameshwari Lal, *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities (Some Sculptures, Metal Images, Terracottas and Minor Antiquities)*, Patna Museum, Patna, 1965.

Gupte, R.S., *The Art and Architecture of Aihole : A Study of Early Chalukyan Art Through Temple Architecture and Sculpture*, D.B. Taraporevala Sons and Co., Bombay, 1967.

Hale, Wash Edward, *Asura in Early Vedic Religion*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1986.

Harle, James C., *Gupta Sculpture : Indian Sculpture of the Fourth to the Sixth Centuries AD*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1974.

Harper, Katherine Anne, *Seven Hindu Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation : Iconography of Sapta Matrkas*, The Edwin Mellen Press, New York, 1989.

Hartal, Herhert, "Excavations at Sonkh, 1969-70", in *BMAUP*, June-December, 1970, No. 5-6.

Hawley, Johan Stratton and Wulff Donna Marie, *The Divine Consort : Radha and the Goddess of India*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1984.

Hazra, R.C., *Studies in Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, Bulletin no. 20, University of Dacca, Dacca, 1940.

———, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, 2 Vols., Sanskrit College, Calcutta, 1958 and 1963.

Hopkins, E. Washburn, *Epic Mythology*, Indological Book House, Delhi, 1968 (first pub. Strasburg, 1915).

Huntington, Susan. L., *The Art of Ancient India : Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, Weatherhill, New York, 1993 (first pub. 1985).

Inamdar, P.A., *Some Archaeological Finds in the Idar State*, Department of Archaeology, Idar State, Himmatnagar, 1936.

Jaiswal, Suvira, "Studies in Early Indian Social History : Trends and Possibilities", in *Survey of Research in Economic and Social History of India*, ed. by R.S. Sharma, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1986.

———, *The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1981.

Jagadiswarananda, Swami, *Devī-Māhātmyam*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1953.

James, Edwin Oliver, *The Cult of Mother-goddess*, London, 1959.

Jash, Pranabananda, *History of Śaivism*, Roy and Chaudhary, Calcutta, 1974.

Jayakar, Pupul, *The Earthern Drum*, National Museum, New Delhi, 1980, published in a revised, updated edition as *The Earth Mother*, Penguin Books (India) Ltd., New Delhi, 1989.

Joshi, M.C., "Śākta Tāntrism in the Gupta Age", in *Aruṇa Bhāratī, A.N. Jani Felicitation Volume*, Baroda, 1983.

Joshi, N.P., "Two Mātṛkā Plagues in the State Museum, Lucknow", in *BMAUP*, 1, March, 1968.

———, *Mathura Sculptures : A Handbook to Appreciate Sculptures in the Archaeological Museum*, Archaeological Museum, Mathura, 1966.

———, "Kuṣāṇa Mātṛkā sculptures in the Light of Literary References", in Paper presented in the international Seminar on the *Art of the Kusana Age*, State Museum, Lucknow, 1984.

———, *Mātṛkās : Mothers in Kuṣāṇa Art*, New Delhi, 1986.

Joshi, N.P. and Sharma. R.C., *Catalogue of the Brāhmanical Sculpture in the State Museum, Lucknow (Part-I)*, Lucknow, 1972.

Kalidos, Raju, "The Malayadippatti Cave Temples", in *SAS*, Vol. IV, 1988.

———, *Iconography of Early Medieval South India : Vol. III, Sakti Goddesses*, Thanjavur, 1990.

Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, 5 Vols., Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1930-62.

Keith, Arthur Berriedale, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads*, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 31, 1925 (reprint, Delhi, 1976).

Kinsley, R. David, *The Sword and the Flute:*

Kali and Krsna, Dark Visions of the Terrible and the Sublime in Hindu Mythology, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1976 (first pub. in 1975).

———, *Hindu Goddesses : Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi,1987.

Kosambi, Damodar Dharmanand, "On the Origin of the Brāhmin Gotras", in *JBBRAS,* Vol. XXVI, 1950.

———, *Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Popular Book Depot., Bombay, 1956.

———, "At the Crossroads : A Study of Mother Goddess Cult Sites", in *Myth and Reality, Studies on the Formation of Indian Culture*, Popular Prakasan, Bombay, 1962.

———, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1977 (first pub. 1970).

Kramrisch, Stella, *Unknown India : Ritual Art in Tribe and Village*, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 1968.

———, "The Indian Great Goddess", in *History of Religions*, Vol. 14, No. 4, May, 1975.

———, *Presence of Śiva*, N.J. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981.

Kumar, Pushpendra, *Śakti Cult in Ancient India*, Bharatiya Publishing House, Varanasi, 1974.

Larrington, Carolyne, *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, Pandora Press, London, 1992.

Lippe, Ashwin, "Early Chalukyan Icons", in *ABA*, Vol. XXXIV, 4.

MacDonell, Arthur Anthony, *Vedic Mythology*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1981 (first pub.1898).

Mackay, Ernest, *Early Indus Civilization* (2nd rev. edn.), Luzac, London, 1948.

———, *Further Excavations at Mohenjodaro*, 2 Vols. Manager Publications, New Delhi, 1938.

Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *The Classical Age*, Vol. 3, of History and Culture of Indian People, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1954.

Mankodi, Kirit, "Śiva Panels of Ellora and Elephanta : Yōgīśvara or Dakṣiṇāmūrti (?)", in *Ellora Caves : Sculptures and Architecture*, ed. by Ratan Parimoo, *et al.*, Books & Books, New Delhi, 1988.

Margaret and James, Stutley, *A Dictionary of Hinduism. Its Mythology, Folklore and Development*, Allied Publishers Private Limited, Bombay, 1977.

Marshall, John, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. I, Indological Book House, Delhi, 1973, (first pub. 1931).

Mehta, R.N., "Five Sculptures from Devnimori", in *Western Indian Art, JISOA*, New Series, 1965.

Mehta, R.N. and S.N. Chowdhari, *Excavations at Devnimori*, M.S. University, Baroda, 1966.

Meister, W. Michael, "Regional Variations in Mātṛkā Conventions", in *ABA*, Vol. XLVII.

Misra, R.N., *Yakṣa Cult and Iconography*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1981.

Mitchell, W.J.T., *Iconology : Image, Text, Ideology,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987.

Mitra, Debala, "Dancing Mothers of Bheraghat", in *JAS*, Letters 22, no. 2, (1956).

Mitterwaliner, Von Geitli, "The Kuṣāṇa Type of Goddess Mahiṣāsuramardinī as Compared to the Gupta and Medieval Types", in *German Scholars on India*, ed. by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1973.

Moctezuma, Eduardo Matos, *The Mask of Death in Prehispanic Mexico*, G.V. Editores, Mexico, 1988.

Monier-Williams, Sir Monier, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1963.

Mukhopadhyay, Manmatha, "Some Notes on Skanda Kārttikeya", in *IHQ*, VII, 1931.

Marie-Louise, Von Franz, *Time — Rhythm and Repose*, Lancashire, 1978.

Nagaswamy, R., *Tāntric Cult of South India*, Agam Kala Prakasan, Delhi, 1982.

Nair, Vishwanathan N.P., *Śilappadikaram* (Malayalam), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Trichur, 1975.

Narain, A.K., "Religious Policy and Toleration in Ancient India with Particular Reference to the Gupta Age", in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. by Bardwell L. Smith, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1983.

Narayanan, M.G.S and Veluthat Kesavan, "Bhakti Movement in South India", in *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, ed. by D.N. Jha, Chanakya Publications, Delhi, 1987.

Neumann, Erich, *The Great Mother : An Analysis of the Archetype*, translated from German by Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series, New York, 1955.

O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1973.

———, "The Shifting Balance of Power in the Marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī", in *The Divine Consort*, ed. by John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marrie Wulff, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1984.

Pathak, Vishwambhar Sharan, *Smārta Religious Tradition*, Kusumanjali Prakashan, Meerut, 1987.

Pal, Pratapaditya, "Some Rajasthani Sculptures of the Gupta Period", in *BAMAM*, Oberlin College, XXVIII/2, 1971.

———, *The Sculpture of India : 3000 B.C.-1300 A.D.*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1985.

Pandit, M.P., *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga*, Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1972.

Panigrahi, Krisna Chandra, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubanesvar*, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1961.

Parimoo, Ratan, *A Guide to Elephanta* by Dr. Hiranand Shastri, and *A New Light on its Significance in Indian Sculpture*, Kanak Publication, New Delhi, 1978.

———, "Some Thoughts on the Sculpture of Viśvarupa Visnu", in *Vaisnavism in Indian Art and Thought*, ed. by Ratan Parimoo, Books & Books, New Delhi, 1987.

Patil, Devendrakumar Rajaram, *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, Deccan College Dissertation series-2, Poona, 1946.

———, *Monuments of Udayagiri Hill*, Archaeological Department, Gwalior, 1948.

———, "Sapta Mātṛkās or Seven Mothers from Besnagar", in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 12th Session, Cuttack, 1949 (Patna, 1950).

———, *The Cultural Heritage of Madhya Bharat*, Government Central Press, Gwalior, 1952.

Patnaik, Satyendra, *Brāhmanical Religion in Ancient Orissa*, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987.

Pollock, Griselda, *Vision and Difference*, Routledge, London, 1992, (first pub. in 1988).

Prakash, Buddha, *Ṛgveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, Vishveshvaranand Institute, Hoshiarpur, 1966.

———, "Yajña : An Anthropo-sociological Approach", in *BV*, XVI(1956).

Prasad, B. Rajendra, *Chalukyan Temples of Andhradesa, Delhi*, 1983.

Ramesh, K.V., *Chalukyas of Vatapi*, Delhi, 1984.

Rao, Gopinatha T.A., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, Pt.II, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1971 (first pub. 1914-16).

Rao, S.R., *Lothal and the Indus Civilization*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1973.

Rahman, Mukhlesur, "The Mātṛkā Vārāhi", ịn *Aspects of Indian Art and Culture*, S.K. Saraswati Commemoration Volume, ed. by Jayanta Chakrabarty and D.C. Bhattacharya, Rddhi India, Calcutta, 1983.

Rosenfield, John, *Dynastic Art of Kuṣāṇas*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967.

Sahni, Daya Ram and Rai Bahadur, "Deogarh Rock Inscription of Svamibhata", in *EI*, Vol. XVIII, (Jan.-Oct. 1925-26).

Sastri, Ajaya Mitra, *India as seen in Bṛhat Saṁhitā of Varāhmihira*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1969.

Sastri. K.N., *New Light on Indus Civilization*, Delhi, 1957.

Sastri, Nilkantha, *A History of South India from Prehistoric Time to the Fall of Vijayanagar*, Oxford University Press, London, 1966 (first pub. 1955).

Soundara Rajan, K.V., "A Magnificent Sapta Mātṛkā Group and Parvati from Vadaval", in *Glimpses of Indian Culture : Architecture, Art and Religion*, Delhi, Sandeep Prakashan, 1981, the article originally co-authored with R.T. Parikh, *PWMB*, No. 7, 1959-62.

———, "Some Iconographic Elements of Pre-medieval Temples", in *LK*, No. 8, 1960.

———, "The Significance of the Śiva Naṭarāja Iconic Tradition", in *JISOA*, New Series, Vol. V, 73.

———, *Cave Temples of Deccan*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1981.

———, "A Devi Cult Nucleus of Jagat Rajasthan", in *Glimpses of Indian Culture : Architecture, Art and Religion*, Sandeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1981.

———, *Ellora Caves, Sculptures and Architecture — An Art Historical Re-appraisal*, Keynote Address, U.G.C. National Seminar on Ellora Caves, Nov. 1985. Published in *Ellora Caves : Sculptures and Architecture*, ed. by Ratan Parimoo, *et al.*, Books & Books, New Delhi.

Schapiro, Mayor, "On the Nature of Abstract Art", in *MQ*, Jan.-Mar., 1937.

Schastok, L. Sara, *The Samalaji Sculptures and 6th Century Art in Western India*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1985.

Sengupta, G., *Eastern Indian Sculpture : A Study in Style and Technique c. 4th-7th Centuries AD*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Calcutta, 1983.

Sengupta, R., "The Yajñaśālā of Kailāsa and Identification of some of its Sculptures", in *IHQ*, 2, Vol. XXXVI, 1960.

Shah, Chimanlal J., *Jainism in Northern India 800 B.C. to A.D. 526*, Longmans Green and Co., Madras, 1932.

Shah, Umakant Premanand, "Ancient Sculptures from Gujarat and Saurashtra", in *JIM*, Vol. VIII, 1952.

———, "Harinegamesin", in *JISOA*, Vol. XIX, 1952-53.

———, "A Few Brāhmanical sculptures in Baroda Museum", in *BBMPG*, Vol. X-XI, 1953-55.

———, "Some Early Sculptures from Abu and Bhinmal", in *BBMPG*, XII, 1955.

———, "Sculptures from Samalaji and Roda, Baroda", in *BBMPG* Vol. XIII, Baroda, 1960.

———, "Mātṛkās and Other Sculptures from North Gujarat and Saurashtra", in *BBMPG*, Baroda, Vol. XIV, 1962.

———, "Western Indian Sculpture and the So-Called Gupta Influence", in *Aspects of Indian Art*, ed. by Pratapaditya Pal, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1972.

———, "Lakulīśa : Śaivaite Saint", in *Discourses on Śiva*, ed. by Michael W. Meister, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1984.

Shah, U.P. and Gupta, P.L., "Sculptures from Saraikela in the Patna Museum", in *JOI*, M.S. University of Baroda, Vol. XVIII.

Sharma, B.N., "Cāmuṇḍā on Owl", in *JOI*, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda, Vol. XXVI, Sept, 1975, No. I.

Sharma, R.S., "The Kali Age : A Period of Social Crisis", in *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, ed. by D.N. Jha, Chanakya Publications, Delhi, 1987.

———, "Conflict, Distribution and Differentiation in Ṛgvedic Society", in *Proceedings of the Indian_History Congress*, 38th Session, Bhubanesvar, 1997.

Shanmugam, P., "The Saptamatri Cult During Chola Times", in *Srinidhih: Perspectives in Indian Archaeology, Art and Culture*, K.R. Srinivasan Festschriff, New Era Publications, Madras, 1983.

Sinha, Chitta Ranjan Prasad, *Early Sculpture of Bihar*, Patna, 1989.

Sinha, Kanchan, *Kārttikeya in Indian art and Literature*, Delhi, 1979.

Sircar, Dines Chandra, *The Successors of Sātvāhanas in the Lower Deccan*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1939.

———, *Select Inscription Bearing on Indian History and Civilization. Vol. I (from Sixth Century B.C. to the Sixth Century AD)*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1942.

———, *The Śākta Pīṭhas*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1973.

Sivaramamurti, C., *Śrī Lakṣmī in Indian Art and Thought*, Kanak Publications, New Delhi, 1982.

Sonawane, V.H., "Mātṛkā sculptures from Mataria and Ardhanarisvara from Tarsang (Panchamahals)", in *JISOA,* New Series, Vol. IX, Dr. Moti Chandra Commemoration Vol. I, Part II.

Spink, Walter M., "Ajanta to Ellora", in *Marg*, 20, No. 2, March, 1967.

———, "The Great Cave at Elephanta: A Study of Sources", in *Easays on Gupta Culture*, ed. by Bardwell Smith, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1982.

Srinivasan, C.R., "Sapta Mātṛkās", in *JOI*, M.S.University of Baroda, Baroda, Vol. XXIV, March-June, 1975, Nos. 3-4.

Srinivasan, K.R., "Some Aspects of Religion as Revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South", in *JMU*, Madras University, XXXII, No. 1, July, 1960.

———, *Temples of South India*, National Book Trust, Delhi, 1971.

Srivastava, M.C.P., *Mother Goddess in Indian Art, Archaeology and Literature*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1979.

Stadtner, M. Donald, "The Śaṅkaragaṇa Panel in the Sagar University Art Museum", in *Indian Epigraphy its Bearing on the History of Art*, ed. by Frederick M. Asher and G.S. Gai, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co. and A.I.I.S., New Delhi, 1985.

Thapar, Romila, *Ancient Indian Social History*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1978.

———, *Cultural Transaction and Early India : Tradition and Patronage*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994.

Tarr, Gary, "Chronology and Development of Chalukyan Cave Temples", in *AO*, VII, 1970.

———, "The Śiva Cave Temple of Dokesvara", in *OA*, Vol. XI, no. 4, winter, 1969.

Thakore, S.R., *Catalogue of the Sculptures in the Archaeological Museum, Gwalior*, Modern Printing Press, Gwalior, Undated.

Tharu, Susie and K. Lalita (ed.), *Women Writing in India : 600 B.C. to Early 20th Century*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1991.

Tiwari, Maruti Nandan and Kamal Giri, "A Note on the Mātṛkā figures from the E.M.E. Daksina Murti, Temple, Baroda", in *Sambodhi*, L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahemedabad, Vol. II, April, 1982, Jan. 1983, Nos. 1-4.

Tiwari, J.N., *The Goddess Cult in Ancient India*, Sandeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1985.

Tripathi, L.K. (ed.), *Position and Status of Women in Ancient India*, 2 Vols., Deptt. of Ancient Indian History Culture and Archaeology, Varanasi, 1988.

Trivedi, R.D., "A Group of Mātṛkās and Some Related Problems", in *JOI*, M.S. University of Baroda, June, 1982, No. 4, Vol. XXXI.

Vats, Madho Sarup, *Excavations at Harappa Being an Account of Archaeological Excavation at Harappa Carried Out Between the Years 1920-21 and 1933-34*, 2 Vols., Bharatiya Publishing House, Varanasi, 1974-75 (first pub. 1940).

Viennot, Odette, "The Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Siddi-ki-Gupha", in *JISOA*, New Series, Vol. IV, 1971-72.

Williams, G. Joanna, *The Art of Gupta India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1982.

Winternitz, M., *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1927.

Woodroffe, Sir John, *Principles of Tantra*, Part I, Madras, 1969, (first pub. 1914-16).

Yadav, B.N.S., "Some Aspects of the Changing Order in India During the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa Age", in *Kuṣāṇa Studies*, ed. by G.R. Sharma, Allahabad, 1968.

———, *Society and Culture in Northern India in the Twelfth Century*, Allahabad, 1973.

———, "Immobility and Subjection of Indian Peasantry in Early Medieval Complex", in *IHR*, I, No. 1, March, 1974.

———, "Problems of the Interaction Between Socio-Economic Classes in the Early Medieval Complex", in *IHR*, III, no.

1, July, 1976.

Zimmer, Heinrich, *The Art of Indian Asia. Its Mythology and Transformation*, 2 Vols., ed. by Joseph Campbell, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Bollingen Series 39, 2nd edn., 1960.

——, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, ed. by Joseph Campbell, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Bollingen Paperback, 1972.

Glossary

abhaya : The granting of protection, generally by a deity.

abhaya-hasta or *abhaya-mudrā* : The protection granting gesture (*mudrā* or *hasta*), employed in art with the raised right palm and extended fingers.

abhiṣeka : A religious ritual of the consecration of power and authority.

advaita : The philosophical position, adhering to the idea of non-duality between god and all its creation, popularised particularly by Ādi Śaṅkara (*ca.* AD 800) and his followers.

ādya : Lit. ' first', or 'original'. Used as a synonym for Devī, meaning original power (*śakti*).

agnikuṇḍa : Sacrificial fire pit.

akṣamālā : Rosary.

ajānana : Having the face of a goat.

ālīḍha : A standing posture of a warrior, with one leg raised and bent at the knee and the other stretched.

añjali : A gesture of respect and salutation in which the two palms are held together, usually near the chest.

aṅkuśa : The elephant goad.

apasmāra or *apasmārapuruṣa* : A demon-dwarf personifying the evils of ignorance.

apradhāna : Something that is not primary.

apsaras : The celestial nymphs who dwell in the court of Indra.

ardhamaṇḍapa : A closed hall in front of the shrine of a temple.

ardhaparayaṅkāsana : A sitting posture with one leg folded and placed horizontally on the seat, and the other hanging down.

aśiva : Anything inauspicious and having evil effect.

aṣṭaparivāra-devatā : The eight retinue deities attending the principal god of a temple.

aśvamedha : The Vedic horse sacrifice.

aśvattha : A fig tree.

atibhaṅga : Having many and/or extreme flexions.

ātmā : An individual soul, used in metaphysical sense.

avadhi-jñāna : The magical knowledge.

avatāra : An incarnation or a decent of a deity, generally that of Viṣṇu.

avatāravāda : The school of thought believing in incarnation of the deity (as against *vyūhavāda*, the school adhering to the emanatory principle of the deity).

*āyudhapuruṣa*s : The weapons of a deity represented anthropomorphically.

*āyudha*s : Various weapons used in war, or different attributes held by deities.

āyurveda : Indian medical science or knowledge, practiced from Vedic times.

bālagraha-cikitsā : The medical treatment for the ailment of children caused by malevolent spirits.

bali : A technical term for an offering of grain, rice or other things, including animal sacrifice to deities.

bhagavān : A term when used along with the name of a deity, mean honour, veneration and respect to the deity concerned.

bhāgavata : The name of theistic cult, generally associated with Viṣṇu which stressed the importance of worship rather than sacrifice.

bhakta : A devotee , who dedicate oneself to a personal deity.

bhakti : The spiritual path of loving devotion to a personal deity.

Bhīl : A tribal community in western and central India.

Bhilla : A female member of Bhīl tribal community.

bhukti : The enjoyment of material happiness, philosophically, the opposite of *mukti*.

bhūta : Malignant spirits, goblins.

bījapūraka : A particular fruit having a number of seeds.

Brahman : The universal, abstract conception of god.

brāhmaṇa/brāhman/brāhmin : The priestly caste in Brāhmanical religion.

brahmāṇḍa : Lit. 'Brahmā's egg', the universe believed to be divided into twenty-one regions.

Bhṛngī : A favourite devotee of Śiva.

cakra : Generically meaning a wheel used for any purpose, in Brāhmanical iconography specifically meaning a discuss, the favourite weapon of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa.

Caṇḍāla : An outcaste, a person of the lowest of the mixed tribes in the Brāhmanical social order.

catura : A dance posture with left leg raised above the ground while standing in *kṣipta* position.

caturmukha : Having four faces.

causaṭ : The number sixty-four.

cāmara or *cauri* : A fly-whisk.

candrakalā : The one-sixteenth of the moon's disc.

chatrī or *chatra* : An umbrella or a parasol, a symbol of royalty.

*daitya*s : Giants, and more specifically represented as demons, generally opposed to *deva*s (gods) in neo-Brāhmanical literature.

ḍamaru : A type of small drum held in the hand, having two conical parts joined at the apexes.

daṇḍa : A staff, rod or sceptre, symbolising power, sovereignty. Also, authority of punishment.

dāsa or *dasyu* : A servant or a slave.

deva or *devatā* : A god in the Vedic and neo-Brāhmanical pantheon.

devakoṣṭha : A niche for placing the image of a deity.

devaloka : The paradise, the world of divinity.

devāṅgana : Celestial nymphs, who attend the divinities.

devaputra : Lit. 'son of god'.

devasenādhipati : The commander-in-chief of the army of gods.

devī(s) : The goddesses.

dhammila : The hair-do in the shape of a bun.

dharma : The moral and religious duties; following the law, conventions and customs.

dharmapravartaka : The one who institutes and controls the functioning of *dharma*.

dhotī : An unstitched cloth worn around the waist and passed between the legs to be tucked in behind.

dhūpa : The fragrant smoke used in rituals.

dhvajastambha : A flagstaff.

Digambara : Lit. 'sky-clad', the naked and rigorously ascetic Jain sect, distinct from Śvetāmbara sect.

dīpa : The oil lamp.

ḍola : That which is dangling and/or swinging.

ḍola-hasta : The hand held in *ḍola*.

dvāpara : The third time division (*yuga*) in the Brāhmanical time cycle.

dvārapālikā : The female door guardians.

dvibhaṅga : Having two flexions.

gadā : A mace or club, a principal attribute of Viṣṇu.

gaṇa : Lit. 'flock' or 'multitude', dwarf attendants of Śiva.

gandharvas : A kind of demi-gods dwelling in the atmosphere, sometimes considered to be musicians.

garbha : Womb or fetus.

garbhagṛha : Lit. 'womb house'. The inner most chamber of a temple where the main icon or any object of worship is placed.

Garuḍa : A mythical bird, with part human and part bird, the *vāhana* of Viṣṇu.

ghaṇṭa : A bell.

ghaṭa : A pitcher.

godohikāsana : Lit. The seated posture for milking cow. A squatting posture with feet firmly planted on the ground.

gotras : The exogamous clans, particularly those of the patrilineal brāhmaṇa caste.

grāmadevatās : The village tutelary deities.

grahas : The class of demons who seize or possess and cause illness to mortals.

grahādhipati : The leader of the *grahas*.

hala : A plough.

haṁsa : A swan, often erroneously translated as goose.

hasta : Lit. A hand, alternatively used to mean *mudrā*.

iṣṭadevatā : The favourite deity chosen by the worshipper.

jagamohana : An enclosed assembly hall of Orissan temples.

janmāntaravāda : The metaphysical rationalisation of cycles of births after deaths.

jaṭābhāra : The untied matted hair.

jaṭādhārī : The one who has matted hair.

jaṭājūṭa : The tied matted hair.

jaṭāmukuṭa : The crown of matted hair.

jāti : The social status on the basis of a caste, or any classification on the basis common traits.

jīvātmā : The individual soul.

janapada : A small political unit.

kadamba : A certain tree (Ipomoea acquatica Forsk).

khadga : A sword.

Kailāsa : A range of mountains, forming part of the Himālaya.

kākapakṣa : A style of hair arrangement in ringlets, usually used for child gods.

kaliyuga : The fourth and the last period/ age in the existence of one cosmic cycle.

kamaṇḍalu : A water vessel used by ascetics.

kaṅkāla-daṇḍa : A staff made of bone, associated with Bhairava form of Siva.

kapāla : A skull, or a cup made of the upper part a skull having Tāntric association.

Kāpālika : A sect of Śaivism of outlandish Tāntric practices.

kapittha : A single hand gesture, with all the fingers folded, except the thump, and the index finger touching the former.

karaṇa : A co-ordinated dance movement involving head, limbs and body. They are 108 in number and are described in *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

karihasta : A hand movement in dance deriving from, or emulating the movement of the trunk of an elephant.

karma : The actions associated with the idea of consequences or 'fruits' — *karmaphala*.

kartārī : A type of knife.

kaṭibandha : A sash, often of cloth, or also of metal.

kaṭyāvalaṁbita : Lit. with the support of waist. Hand held on the waist.

kaṭisama : The hands held parallel to the waist, part of a *karaṇa* movement.

khaṭvāṅga : A staff with a skull at the top, symbol of magical and spiritual power, associated with Tāntric practices.

khadga : A sword, used in warfare, and in iconography also symbolising power of knowledge to destroy ignorance.

kirīṭamukuṭa : An embellished crown or tiara made of metal.

Kṛṣṇalīlā : The divine play of Kṛṣṇa, specifically referring to the series of heroic childhood adventures of the god.

kṛta : The name of the first of the four ages of the world.

kṣatriya : A person belonging to the warrior class.

kṣipta : Lit. that which is depressed. A symmetrical standing/dancing posture with legs bent at the knees, forming an upper and lower triangles in the lower part of the body. Coloquially described as 'half-sitting position'.

kūcabandha : A breast-band.

kuñcita : A position of feet with sole planted on the ground and toes raised up.

kuṇḍalinī : The latent energy according to *yoga* tradition, personified as a goddess, which lies at the base of spinal column, imagined in the shape of a coiled serpent.

kuṇḍika : A bowl-shaped pitcher.

kūrma : A tortoise.

Kuru : One of the *janapadas*.

lalitāsana : A posture with one leg folded on the seat and the other bent at the knee and hanging down.

liṅga : Lit. A sign of gender. An uniconic, phallic symbol, exclusively associated to Śiva.

loka : World or people.

lokamātā : A mother goddess worshipped by the people.

mā : Mother.

mahārājalīlāsana : Lit. The relaxed sitting posture of a king. In sculpture identified as seated posture with one leg folded and placed on the seat with knee upward, and the other leg stretched down.

Mahāyāna : Lit. Great Vehicle. A designation to a number of Buddhist sects, beliefs, and practices, with an emphasis on the divine nature of the Buddha and the concept of *bodhisattva*-hood.

mālā : A garland or a necklace.

mālādhara or *māladhārī* : The one carries a *mālā*.

malina : Dirty.

maṇḍala : A diagrammatic configuration, a type of *yantra*, used as an aid to meditation.

maṇḍapa : A pillared hall or a porch, having a raised ground.

mantra : A verbal or mental utterance, believed to be having magical power.

Marudeśa : A desert country /Rajasthan.

matsya : A fish.

modaka : A rounded sweet, favourite to Gaṇeśa.

māyā : The illusionary nature of the phenomenal world.

māyīn : The one who wields the power of *māyā*, an epithet of Kṛṣṇa.

mṛgacarma : The deerskin, used as a mat to sit upon by mendicants.

mṛga : A deer.

mudrā : Lit. A seal or sign. A gesture made with one or both hands, with definite communicative intentions, alternatively used as *hasta*.

mukti : Emancipation and release from the world of pleasures, pains and the cycles of birth and death.

mukuṭa : A crown, a diadem, or a tiara.

muṇḍa : A severed head.

muṇḍamālā : A garland of severed heads.

nāga : A snake; or a tribe, the name of a people and their country, in eastern Assam.

nāga-yajñopavīta : A snake as an *yajñopavīta*, or, *yajñ pavīta*, worn over the shoulder and passing over the chest and upper abdomen. A mark of brāhmaṇa caste, worn from the time of initiation ceremony.

nāgarāja : A serpent king.

nakṣatra(s) : A star or a cluster of stars, or a constellation.

Nandī : The name of Śiva's bull *vāhana*.

Nandī-*maṇḍapa* : A *maṇḍapa* which shelters the image of *Nandī*.

nara-vāhana : Any deity who rides on a human being.

Nara-Varāha : The Varāha (boar) incarnation of Viṣṇu, represented with human body and boar's head.

nṛtta-hasta : The decorative hand gestures employed in pure dance sequences without any narrative content.

nāṭaka : Drama in literary or performative form.

nātya : The dance with representational and narrative content.

*navagraha*s : The nine planets or the personifications of nine planets.

oḍhanī : The veil or the cloth covering head and parts of body.

padma : A lotus.

padmāsana : Lit. Lotus seat. A sitting posture in which both the legs are folded and crossed, and each foot rests upon the thigh of the opposite leg.

pakṣinī : Having the form of a bird.

pañca ma-kāra : The five M's of Tāntrism. They include *mada* (wine), *matsya* (fish), *māṁsa* (meat), *mudra* (parched grain or kidney beans) and *maithuna* (ritualistic copulation).

Pañcarātra : A Vaiṣṇava sect, the doctrines of which where formalised during the neo-Brāhmanical consolidation, with emphasis on devotion towards Viṣṇu and *pūjā*.

paramātmā : The supreme soul, also named as *parabrahman*.

paraśu : An axe.

pāśa : A noose.

Pāśupata-Maheśvara : Considered to be an early *Śaiva* sect, with a stress on asceticism of outlandish nature.

paṭa : A painted scroll or/and a stone panel with sculptural representations.

Pātāla : The nether regions, seven in number.

pīpal : A tree, sacred in India from time of the Harappan period.

piśāca : An ugly, flesh-eating demonic being.

piśācī : A she-devil, the female gender of *piśāca*.

pradakṣiṇā : Lit. Towards the right. Circumambulation of a deity or a shrine.

pradakṣiṇāpatha : A path for circumambulation in a temple.

prākāra : An enclosure wall, sometimes with a roof and spaces for various purpose in a south Indian temple.

prakṛti : Variously translated as nature, matter, primeval material nature, producing and produced. Lit. That which has the urge to produce, i.e., nature. In *Śākta* context seen as the active principle (as different from the inactive *puruṣa*, the male principle), and personified as female.

pralaṁbapādāsana : The seated position with both the legs hang downward.

preta : A dead person.

pṛthvī : Lit. The wide or the extended one. The earth and its personification as a goddess.

pūjā : Simple rituals of a devotee offered to a deity, distinct from the sophisticated and complex Vedic *yajña*.

puruṣa : Lit. Man or male. The male principle in the *prakṛti-puruṣa* duality. ***See***, *prakṛti*.

pustaka : A manuscript or a book.

Rabāri : Also known as Bharwads. A present-day folk community living in Gujarat, particularly in the region of Saurastra. The main source of their livelihood derive from the cattle they keep.

ṛṣi : A seer, or a holy man.

rajas : The second of the three universal qualities (*guṇa*s). It implies modality of motor energy and mental activity.

rakṣā-mantra : A protective utterance or a chant.

rākṣasas : The demons, generally including other malevolent spirits.

rākṣasī : A demoness.

Śabaras : One of the so-called barbarian tribal community in ancient India.

sabhāmaṇḍapa : A hall or a pavilion meant for congregation in a temple.

Ṣaḍānana : Lit. Six-faced. An epithet of Skanda.

sādhaka : A practitioner, in the sense of being a student of any discipline, generally religious or artistic.

sādhanā : The training that leads to a goal.

sahasradalapadma : A lotus with a thousand petals.

Sahasrākṣa : Lit. Thousand eyed. An epithet of Indra.

sāhitya : Literature.

Śakaṭa-Bhañjana : The incident of Kṛṣṇa destroying/killing the *asura* who came in the form of a cart.

Śakti-pīṭha : Lit. A seat. The 108 locations of the Śakti worship. Mythically associated with the places where the various parts of Satī's body fell, when Śiva carrying the dead body went wild after her death.

sama and *samabhaṅga* : A state of equilibrium. In iconography and dance, a frontal stance with no flexions in the body (*samabhaṅga*).

samapāda : The feet planted closely and frontally, in symmetry.

saṁsāra : The bondage of life to birth and death cycles or metempsychosis, determined by the law of *karma*.

samudramanthana : The myth of the Churning of the Ocean.

sandhyās : Lit. Juncture. The time of twilight.

sangha or *saṁgha* : The Buddhist monastic community and its members.

śaṅkha : A conch, the blowing of which at the beginning (for awakening) considered auspicious and ensured success in any endeavour, like war and worship.

sārūpya : A state of total identification with an object of concentration.

sarpakuṇḍala : An ear-ornament in the shape of a snake.

sat : Lit. Being. The truth in epistemology and the good in ethics.

ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda : The technical term used in Yoga tradition to mean the raising of *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* from *mūlādhāra* to *sahasrāra* (*bheda*) through six (*ṣaṭ*) centres of power (*cakra*).

saumya : Lit. Relating to *soma*. Pleasant and benign.

sāyujya : The achievement of eternal bliss in unison with one's ideal.

śālā : Generically, a shrine or a sacred space created for specific purposes. In south Indian temple architecture, a rectangular shrine with barrel-shaped roof and the decorative motif of the same characteristics.

siddhis : Various supernatural and spiritual accomplishments.

śikhaṇḍaka : A style of pony tail like hair arrangement on the two sides of the head, indicating the youngness of the wearer.

sīmantonnayan : A ceremony performed during the first pregnancy to ensure a safe and successful delivery.

Smārta : The religion or a person adhering to the corpus of *smṛti* (Lit. remembered or recalled) literature, distinguished from those who consider Vedic literature as authoritative, which are said as *śruti* (Lit. heard).

śrāddha : A post-funerary ceremony of feeding the departed, as a mark of honouring the departed.

śreṣṭhī : A person belonging to a *śreṇī* or *śreṣṭī* — a guild.

śrīcakra : An *yantra* — meditational diagram used for Yogic/Tāntric *sādhanā*.

śrīvatsa : Lit. Favourite of Śrī-Lakṣmī. A particular symbol, depicted as a triangle or as a flower like shape, sometimes found on the chest of the images of Viṣṇu.

sruva : An wooden spoon used to pour *ghī* into *sṛc* at the time of Vedic *yajñas*.

sthānaka : Various stationary postures of the legs, used in dance and also in iconography.

stūpa : A dome-shaped Buddhist architecture, at times in votive form, containing the relic of the Buddha or others, like the important Buddhist monks or teachers.

sūcī-mudrā : A gesture in which the index finger is kept straight while other fingers are folded.

sūcī-pada : A raised position of the foot in which only the tip of the toe touchs the ground.

śūdra : The fourth social class in the Brāhmanical social stratification. Though generally agreed as surfs and members of various guilds, considering the constant changes in Indian history, it is difficult to generalize the nature of their social status and interrelation with other classes.

sudūrgandha : That which emits foul smell.

sukumārika : That which is nice and gentle.

śūla : A lance.

śūlapuruṣa : A personification of a lance.

suṣumnā : According to the Yoga tradition, the chief vain of the body which runs through the spinal column, on which are located the *ṣaṭ-cakras*.

sūtikāgṛha : A maternity room/house.

svastika : Apart from being the name of an auspicious symbol, a dance terminology denoting the crossed position of limbs.

svastika-pāda : The feet in *svastika* position.

Śvetāmbara : Lit. The white clad. Name of one of the Jain sects, whose ascetic practices are less severe than the Digambaras.

tamas : Lit. Darkness. One of the three qualities of material world, i.e., the disintegrative potential, according to *Sāṁkhya* philosophy.

tāmasika : Having the characteristics of darkness, disintegration and dissolution.

tāṇḍava : The cosmic dance of Śiva at the time of creation and destruction.

tapas : The ascetic practices.

tejas : The vital energy in the form of light.

tribhaṅga : A decorative standing posture of the body with three-angled flexions.

triśūla : A trident.

tumbā : The sound box made of wood or pumpkin shell attached to a *vīṇā* or similar string instruments for the purpose of resonance.

udāsīna : Lit. Indifferent.

ugra : Terrible, mighty, cruel and ferocious.

ugrarūpiṇī : She, whose appearance is *ugra*.

upavarṇaka-chamber : A secondary, partially hidden bay.

ūrdhavamaṇḍalī hasta or *uromaṇḍalī hasta*:

The hand(s) raised above the head.

ūrdhvaretas : The erect phallus.

utkuṭikāsana : A seated posture where both the legs are folded and placed on the seat. While one leg is placed vertically with the sole planted on the seat, the other placed horizontally with the sole upturned.

uttānapāda : A lying down posture, in which both the spread-out legs are folded and planted vertically on the ground, as in birth-giving.

uttarīya : An unstitched upper garment put across the shoulders, partially covering forearms and back.

vāhana : A mount, a carrier or a vehicle of a deity, usually an animal or a bird.

Vaiṣṇava : The Brāhmanical cult of Viṣṇu or/and a person who is as follower of the cult.

vaiśya : The third of the four classes of Brāhmanical social stratification or/and a person who belongs to it.

vajra : A weapon with two prongs of varied shapes at two ends.

vajrapuruṣa : A personification of *vajra*.

valamburi : Having orientation to the right side, when used in the context of the iconography of Gaṇeśa which mean the trunk that is bent to the right side, which is an unusual feature.

vāmācāra : The designation of a section of Tāntric religion, who follow the 'left-handed' path. *Vāma* means female and eros, and *ācāra* means practice, and hence the combined meaning suggests female centered ritual practices.

vanamālā : A long garland made of flowers, usually seen as an attribute of Viṣṇu images.

varada : A boon.

varadamudrā : A boon-granting gesture, which is portrayed as an open palm turned downward.

varṇa : Lit. Colour. Term denoting the four Brahmanical social strata.

varṇāśramadharma : The stipulated socio-politico and economic codes, conducts and regulations for each of the four *varṇa*s, such as in *Manu Smṛti* (The Laws of Manu).

Vedānta : Lit. End of *Veda*. One of the six Indian philosophical schools, exemplified in *Upaniṣad*s and later interpreted by Ādi Śaṅkara (*ca.* AD 800). The tenets are monism (*advaita*), concept of liberation (*mukti*) and other worldly idealism or anti-materialism (*māyāvāda*).

Vetāla : A demon, or a ghoul believed to be inhabiting in burial grounds.

vibhūti : Manifestation of a supreme power.

vibhūti-vāda : The school of thought believing in emanatory principle of the supreme power, as against incarnatory principle (*avatāra-vāda*).

vīṇā : A particular string instrument.

vīṇādhara : One who holds a *vīṇā*.

Viśvarūpa : Lit. Multiform. Epithet of demon Trisiras and the name of the cosmic form of Viṣṇu.

vitarka-mudrā : A gesture indicating discourse, shown as open hand with index finger and thumb touching at the tips.

vṛṣabha : Bull.

vyūha : A manifestation or emanation, generally of Viṣṇu and different from *avatāra*.

yajña : The Vedic form of propitiating the gods by sacrifices made at fire altar.

yajñaśālā : A shrine made for *yajña*. (**See also** *śālā*.)

yajñopavīta : The sacred thread worn by brāhmaṇa from the time of *upanayana* (initiation rite).

yantra : A mechanical device or a mystical diagram used for meditation. (**See** *maṇḍala* also).

yantra-vidhāna : Laying out of an *yantra*.

yoga : Lit. To unite. Spiritual practices of varied approaches, all proposing an ultimate union with the Universal.

yoganidrā : The meditation-slumber. Deriving from *yoga* tradition, Viṣṇu is said to be entering into *yoganidrā* during the interval between *yuga*s, which is a period of inaction. When personified, Yoganidrā is conceived as a female.

yogapaṭa : A band tied across the folded knees as a support for continued comfortable and steady posture in meditation.

yogasādhanā : The definite modes of *yoga* practices that is expected to lead to a goal.

yogī or *yogin* : A person pursuing *yoga*, or one who has accomplished *yoga*.

yoni : The female generative organ, the symbol of female principle.

yuga : The period of world's existence, conceived in four parts.

yūpa : A sacrificial pillar or a stake to which the sacrificial victim is tied.

Index

- Abameri, 108
- Abhīra, 80
- *abhiṣeka*, 9
- *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, 42
- Acculturation of female gender, 162
- Aditi, 19
  - Sculptures of Aditi Uttānapāda, 15
- Āditya I, 175
- Ādityas, 19
- *Advaita*, 58, 59
- Aegean Coast, 14
- *Āgamas*, 10
  - *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*
  - *Ruruvakarṇāgama*
  - *Suprabhedāgama*
- Āgamic injunctions, 95
  - values, 159
- Agñey, 95, 96
- Āgneyi, 18
- Agni, 19, 23, 32, 35, 38, 39, 55-57, 96, 169, 172
  - seven mothers, 21
  - seven red sisters, 21
  - Kālī, Karālī, Manojava, Sadhumravarṇā, Sphuligini, Sulohitā, Viśvarūpī
- *Agni Purāṇa*, 9, 37, 55, 64
- Agrawala, R.C., 32, 38, 40, 73, 75, 76, 78, 80, 82, 92, 93, 95
- Agrawala, V.S., 13, 32, 37, 42, 43-45, 49, 60
- Ahicchatra sculptures, 45
- Aihole, 7, 84-87, 95, 96, 108, 116, 121-23, 126, 136, 174, 175
- Aindri, 1, 64, 66, 77, 85, 87, 88-92, 94, 104-07, 109, 111-13, 115, 119, 121-23, 125, 126, 128, 134, 135, 137, 139, 140, 144, 147, 149, 173
- Aitareya, 9
- *Aja*, 13
- *Akṣara*, 13
- Alampakkam, 125
- Alampur, 121-23, 146
- Amanwa, 91, 93, 94, 113, 114
- Aṁbikā, 21, 23-25, 49, 55, 63, 106, 107, 128, 147, 158, 161
- Aṁjhara, 73, 80, 104-08, 110, 119, 126-28, 134, 150
- Amreli, 79
- *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*, 10
- Ancient Indian Medical Literature, 38
  - Āyurveda, 37,
    - works *Aṣṭāṅga Saṁgraha, Caraka Saṁhitā, Kāśyapa Saṁhitā Suśruta Saṁhitā*
- Andhakāsura, 64, 65, 117, 174
- Andhapūtanā, 37, 42
- Aniruddha, 160
- Anthropomorphic Conceptions, 19
- Aparājitā, 56, 63, 142
- Aparājitāpṛcchā, 10, 60
- Apasmārapuruṣa, 140
- *Apsaras*, 36
- *Āraṇyakas*, 9
- *Āraṇyaka Parvan*, 33, 35, 36, 55, 56
- archetypal conception, 5

  feminine,17
Ardhanārīśvara, 4
Arjuna, 159
Arka Brahma temple, 122
Arunachalam, M., 124
Āryā, 35-37, 56
Āryan tribes, 156
Asā, 56
Ashar, Fredrick, 91, 113
aśiva group of mothers, 40, 41
  Mātṛkās, 56
    Āryā, Brahmatā, Hālimā, Kākī, Mālinī, Palalā, Vaimitrā
*Aṣṭamātṛkā*s, 88, 148
Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya, 9, 38
Aṣṭāṅga Saṁgraha, 32, 35
asuras, 2, 24, 37, 63, 64, 47
Asutosh Museum, 148
Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra, 43
Aśvini Kumāras, 20
Atharvaveda, 19, 58, 156, 175
Auwa, 108
Avantī, 61
avatāra-vāda, 161
Ayomukhī, 37
āyudhas, 2

Babylonians, 20
Bachofen, 16
Bādāmī, 86
Badapa, 62
Badoh-Pathari, 7, 76-79, 53, 88, 89, 93, 96, 127, 149, 176
Bāla-Brahma Temple, 121, 122, 126-28, 145
Bālagraha, 33, 37, 38, 40, 48, 49, 168, 174
  beliefs, 6
  deities, 33
  tradition, 7, 9, 34, 45, 169
Bali, 37
Bānabhaṭṭa, 9, 61
  Harṣacarita, Kādambarī
Banerjea, J.N., 2, 46, 60, 165, 171
Baroda Museum, 136
Besanagar, 7, 77-79, 86, 88, 93, 94, 108, 116, 118, 176
Betwā, 88
Bhadrā, 32, 44, 46, 60, 80
Bhadra Kālī, 23, 60, 61, 161
Bhadrārya, 60
Bhadraśakhā, 35
Bhagavān Vāsudeva, 32
  Viśākhā, 35
bhagavata mātaraḥ, 76
Bhāgvata movement, 32
Bhairava, 66, 95, 137
  -cārya, 61
Bhandarkar, R.G., 174
Bhanu Chandra, 61
Bharat Kala Bhavan, 91, 112, 114, 127
Bharatamuni, 9, 61
  Nātya-Śāstra
Bhārhut, 47
Bhāsa, 9, 61
  Daridra Cārudatta
Bhattacharji, Sukumari, 19, 24, 159
Bhavānī, 117
Bhṛngī, 86
Bhūdevī, 109
Bhūtas, 44
Bhuteśvara Ṭīlā, 47
Bhuvanadeva, 66
  Aparājitapṛcchā
Bolon, Carul, 123
Brahalī, 35
Brahmā, 58, 63, 65, 172, 173, 175
Brahma Purāṇa, 9, 55

brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya, 166
Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, 9, 37, 55
Brahmāṇī, 1, 31, 60, 64-66, 76-78, 84, 86-94, 105-09, 111, 113-15, 119-23, 125, 126, 128, 134-39, 143, 144, 146, 149, 173, 175
Brāhmaṇic Consorts, 77
Brāhmaṇical acculturisations, 157
  art, 3
    of *Śāiva, Śākta, Vaiṣṇava*
  colonisation, 165
  devine feminine, 4
  gods, 1, 63, 77, 172
  goddesses, 17
  feminine potentialities, 31
  icons, 139
  images, 139
  mythology, 4
  pantheon, 36
  religion, 3, 5, 22
  Saptamātṛkās, 17
  society, 4
  traditions, 4
Brāhmaṇisation process, 6
Brāhmaṇism, 157
Brahmatā, 37, 56
Brāhmī, 61, 66
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 9
Bṛhat Saṁhitā, 9, 60, 65, 165, 170
Briffault, 164
Bronze Age, 14
Buddha, 157
Buddhavarṣa, 62
Buddha Prakash, 13
Buddhist iconographical programme, 156
  traditions, 156
Buhler, 42-44
Burgess, James, 117
Cālukyans, 86, 88, 112, 116, 121, 124
Cāmuṇḍā, 1, 2, 5, 21, 37, 59, 63, 64, 66, 75-79, 81, 82, 85-7, 89, 92-5, 104-15, 117, 119-23, 125, 127, 128, 135, 137, 140-44, 146, 147, 149, 167, 175, 177
  iconography, 83, 88
Canarese Māri Goddesses, 12
Caṇḍa, 63, 147
Caṇḍī, 170
Caṇḍikā, 9, 63, 64, 66, 161
Candra, 75, 172
Candrabhāgā, 21
Candrāpīḍa, Prince, 43, 61
Caraka Saṁhitā, 9, 32, 38, 165
Cārudatta, 61
*Caunsaṭh yoginī*s, 3, 59, 148
Caunsaṭh yoginī temple, 138
Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 9
Chattopadhyaya, Debi Prasad, 16, 163, 164, 174
Chezerla, 123, 126, 145
Chinnamastā, 59
Cola, 88, 121, 123, 143
Configuration, 142
Conflation of tratitions, 88
Coomaraswamy, 47
Cunningham, 139

daityas, 36
*Ḍākinī*s, 9
Dakṣa Prajāpati, 35, 113
Dakṣiṇāmūrti-Śiva, 119, 123, 126, 143, 149, 173
Dantivarman, 125
Daridra Cārudatta, 9, 61
*Dasa-Mahāvidyā*s, 59
Dash, M.P., 147
Dawn, 19
Deogarh (Jhansi), 63, 83, 88, 91, 93, 116, 125-28
Devakī, 42, 43
Devananda, 42, 44

Devāṅgan, 134
devaniketa-maṇḍalāṇi, 60
Devas, 120, 142, 143, 147
Devasena, 32
  ephithets of-, 56
    Aparājitā, Asā, Kuhu, Lakṣmī, Sadvṛtti, Saṣṭhī, Sinivālī, Sakharpada
Devī, 2, 63, 64, 117, 141, 160, 161, 169, 170
  three aspects, 142
  three qualities, 59
Devī Bhāgavata, 9, 25
Devi Māhātmya, 1, 24, 25, 28, 59, 63-65, 117, 118, 142, 147, 148, 160, 161, 169, 170, 172
Devī mythology, 24
Devī-Purāṇa, 65, 147
Devisūkta, 58
Devī worship, 2
Devnimori, 73, 94
Dhangaon, 48, 74, 75, 96
Dhank, 108, 109, 126, 134
Dhanya, 44
dharmaśāstra, 5
Dhavalikar, M.K., 12, 13
Ḍhokeśvara Mahādeva, 120
Dhruva, 141
Dhūmralocana, 63
Digaṁbara Jain 42
  Śvetāmbara schism, 42
Dikshit, S.K., 19, 21, 57
Diti, 36
Divakaran, Odile, 23
Dramas, 9
  Daridra Cārudatta
  Harṣacarita
  Kādambarī
  Mṛcchakaṭika
Dumuzi, 14
Dungarpur, 104, 105
Durgā, 2, 9, 21, 24, 25, 49, 55, 94, 117, 141, 142, 158-60, 167, 168, 172
Durgā Mahiṣāuramardinī, 24, 75, 117, 165, 167, 168, 172
Durgāstava, 159
Durgā-Stotra, 159
Durgādevī-Virocanī, 23
Durgī, 23
Dyaus, 18

Early iconographic typologies, 74, 79
Early regional traditions — Deccan, 83
Early South Inian traditions, 124
Early traditions
  Ellora, 115
  Orissa, 112
Egypt, 14
Ekādaśaliṅgeśvara temple, 136
Eka Patthara kī Bāvaḍī, 88, 89
Elephanta, 7, 84-87, 95, 96, 116, 120, 143, 174, 175
Eliade, Mircea, 57
Ellora, 83, 85-87, 106, 113, 116, 117, 120, 121, 125-28, 143, 145, 146, 150, 175, 176
  Brāhmaṇical Caves, 118
  elaborations, 141
Enlil, 14
Epic-Purāṇic religion, 159

Female deities conception, 22
Female worship, 6
Feminine spirits, 35
Fergusson, James, 117
Fleet, 60
Frazer, James, 57

Gaja-Lakṣmī, 148
Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrti, 117, 120, 148
Gajjar, Irone, 14

Galaganātha temple, 122
Gamudabhe, 142
Gananātha, 66
Gaṇapati, 63, 85, 89, 160
Gāndhāra, 56, 73, 80, 81
Gandharvas, 36
Gaṇeśa, 48, 75, 76, 77, 79, 82, 84-91, 93-96, 104, 105, 107-10, 113-15, 116, 119, 121, 122, 124-26, 136-38, 141, 143, 148, 159, 160, 172, 173-75
Gaṅgā, 55, 56, 96, 160, 168
Gangadhar, 56, 60, 62, 165
Gaurī, 9, 56
Genesis of South Indian Traditions, 121
Gettly, Alice, 175
Goddesses cult, 112
  iconographical details, 149
  origin, 161
Goetz, H., 141
Gopalganj (Sagar), 90
Gopinatha Rao, T.A., 2
Govinda, II, 142
Govinda, III, 141
*Graha*s, 32
  Rākṣasas
  Yakṣas
Greeks, 20, 73
Griswold, 20
G̣uha-Skanda, 38, 63
Gupte, R.S., 87
Gwalior Archaeological Museum, 78

Haimavatī, 172
  Umā, 23
Hālimā, 35, 37, 56
Harappa, 14, 15
Harappan Civilisation, 13
Hari, 43, 66
Harinegameṣī, 42, 43
Harineigameṣin, 7, 33, 35, 37, 39, 43-46, 48
  iconographical features, 42
Hārīti, 7, 40, 46-48, 62
Harivaṃśa Purāṇa, 41, 160
Harle, J.C., 77, 78
Harper, Katherine Anne, 2, 12, 17, 20-22, 34, 72, 77, 143, 147, 166
  Saptamātṛkā Iconology
Harṣa, 61
Harṣacarita, 9, 61
Hȧzra, 64
Hebrews, 20
Heptad concepts, 85
  traditions, 55
Hinduism, 18

Iconographic,
  codes, 148
  forms, 2
  Durgā, Saptamātṛkās
  innovations, 126
  typologies, 7

Jambhāla, 46
James, E.O., 15
Jayakar, Pupul, 12, 13
Jayasiṁha I, 62
Jayatsena (Maharaja), 76
Joshi, M.C., 60, 165, 170
Joshi, N.P., 32, 33, 37-40, 42, 47, 56, 74, 76
Jungian analytical psychology, 16

Kādambarī, 43, 61
Kadrū, 36
Kailāśanātha temple, 124, 127, 141, 143, 146, 149, 150
Kaiṭabha, 63

Kākī, 35, 37, 56
Kakkolanātha Cave, 143
Kalā, 118-21, 141, 142, 172, 175, 177
Kālabhairava, 85-87, 95, 106, 107, 117, 120, 126, 127, 135-37, 141, 148, 149, 174, 175
Kalā Rudra, 175
Kālī, 5, 21, 23, 59, 63, 64, 83, 116, 117, 119, 120, 123, 125, 127, 141, 158, 159, 169, 175, 177
Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā, 63, 64, 162, 173
Kālidāsa, 96
  Kumārasambhavam
Kālikā, 63, 65, 147
Kalpasūtra, 33, 42
  paintings, 43
Kāma, 159
Kāmadeva, 47
Kanchipuram, 124, 144
Kanha, 60
  Dohākośa
Kaṅkali Ṭīlā, 44
Kannagi, 124
Kannauj, 150
Kanyākumārī, 23
Kāpālikas, 146
Kapoteśvara temple, 123, 125, 145
Karālī, 21, 23, 169
Karamjanīlayā, 36
Kārttikeya, 40, 85, 124, 126, 159, 160, 172
Karvan, 116, 128, 135, 136, 150
Kāśyapa Saṁhtā, 9, 38, 45
Kaṭha Upaniṣad, 9
Kātyāyanī, 23
Kauberi, 60, 85, 96
Kaumāri, 1, 31, 60, 64-66, 75-77, 82, 84, 86-90, 93, 104-08, 110-15, 119, 121-23, 125, 126, 128, 134-37, 139, 144, 146, 147, 149, 173
Kauśāmbī, 15
Kauśikī (Aṁbikā), 63, 64, 142, 143, 148
Kearns, Emily, 18, 159, 171
Kekind, 137, 150
Kekind Mātṛkās, 138
Kena, 9
Kena Upaniṣad, 23
Keśini, 56
Khiching, 113, 148
Korravai, 124
Kosambi, D.D., 168
Koṭā (Shivpuri), 111, 126
Koteśvar, 106, 108-10, 126-28, 134, 135, 176
Koṭiyarka shrine, 74
Kramrisch, Stella, 21, 51
Kṛṣṇa, 43
  Pūtanā-*vadha*, 42
Kṛttikās, 35, 55-58, 73, 78, 80, 82, 83, 95, 96, 168, 169, 174
Kṣara, 13
Kṣatrapa, 73
Kubera, 7, 24, 33, 34, 46-48, 60, 61, 145, 166, 172
  sculptural reliefs, 47
Kuhu, 56
Kula kuṇḍalinī, 170
Kumāra, 66
Kumārabhṛtyatantra, 38, 40, 43
Kumārasambhavam, 96
Kumārikākhaṇḍa, 9, 37, 55, 56
Kumbharia temple, 43
Kūrma Purāṇa, 9
Kuṣāṇa art, 73
  bālagraha, 32
  sculptures, 31, 32, 34, 42, 47
  Mātṛkās, 7, 31, 33, 49
  mother, 49
  traditions, 42, 56, 79, 88

Lākinī, 170
Lakṣmī, 33, 46-48, 56, 76, 159

Lakulīśa cult, 112, 114
Liṅga Purāṇa, 9, 40
local currents of belief, 108
Lohitāyanī, 36, 40, 56
Lokamātās, 32, 35, 36
  Pūtanā
  Śākunī
Lokāyata, 164
  cultures, 6
  traditions, 7
Los Angeles County Museum, 82
Lucknow Museum, 40, 47, 111

Mackay, Ernest, 12, 14
Madhu, 63
Madhyadeśa, 79, 80, 83, 96, 114, 165
Maduraikāṇḍam, 124
Mahābalipuram, 144
Mahābhārata, 9, 13, 24, 33, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 46, 55, 56, 95, 159, 168, 174
  Śalyaparvan, 37
  Vanaparvan, 32
Mahādevī, 161
Mahākāla, 116, 120, 148, 175
Mahākālī, 64
Mahālakṣmī, 161
Mahāmāyā, 63, 169
Mahāvīra, 42-44
Mahāyāna Buddhism, 46, 165
Maheśvarī, 1, 31, 64-66, 76, 77, 84, 86-91, 104-08, 111-15, 119, 121-23, 125, 126, 134, 135, 136, 139, 143, 144, 146, 147, 149, 173
Mahiṣa episode, 162
Mahiṣāsura, 63, 161
Mahiṣāsuramardinī, 60, 117
  Durgā, 161, 172
Mahudi, 74
Malagaon, 109, 134
Malayadippatti, 143
Malevolent goddesses, 36
Mālinī, 37, 56
Mātṛkā, 1, 3, 5, 9, 31, 33, 36-38, 41, 46-48, 55, 56, 59-66, 74-90, 92, 95, 96, 104-08, 111-19, 121-26, 128, 135, 137, 139, 141-47, 149, 150, 165-67, 169-71, 174-77,
  concept, 6
  conflation of two aspects, 110
  deities, 40
  dreadful, 56
    Lohitāyanī, Mukhamaṇḍikā, Pūtanā, Revatī, Śaramā, Śitapūtanā, Vinatā
  iconographical features, 34, 93, 109, 173
  iconography, 7, 33, 65, 79, 84, 88, 92, 93, 95, 96, 103, 112, 113, 117, 123, 125, 126, 138, 139, 145
  image, 10, 81, 92, 134, 136, 138, 166
  inscriptional evidence, 60, 145
  meaning, 145
  motherhood, 168
  paṭa, 139, 140
  prefiguration, 45
  relief fragments, 93, 120
  sculptures, 1, 72, 73, 74, 79, 94, 104, 107, 113, 116, 124, 136, 145, 148
  sculptures at
    Badoh-Pathari
    Besnager
    Devgarh
    Udayagiri
  symbology, 116
  traditions, 79, 148, 149
  two ideas, 91
  types 32
    Saṣṭhī
    Vasudharā
  worship 9, 60, 65, 74
Mātṛs 33, 60

Matsya Purāṇa, 9, 64
Māyā, 55, 58
Mayurākṣaka, 60
Mayuraśarman, 62
Medhas, 148
Medical treatises, 9
  Caraka Saṁhitā, Nāṭakas, Śilpa Śastras
Medievalism in Prospect, 130
Mehta, P.N., 80
Meister, Michael W., 65, 76, 108, 166
Mesopotamia, 14
Misra, R.N., 46
Mitchell, W.J.T., 166
Mitrā, 35, 37, 56
Mitra, Ajay, 60
Modi, 134
Mohenjo-Daro, 12, 15
Monier Monier-Williams, 1
monistic goddess concept, 25
Mother earth, 14
Mother-Goddess, 14-16, 19, 20, 34, 41, 79
Moti Chandra, 22, 24, 47
Mount Abu, 109, 110, 127, 134
Mṛcchakaṭika, 9, 61
M.S. University, 2
Mukhamaṇḍikā, 36, 37, 45, 56
mūlādhara cakra, 170
Muṇḍa, 63, 147
Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 13, 21, 169
Muṇḍeśvarī, 90, 91, 94, 111, 125, 126
Muṇḍuka, 9
Murtazigang, 15
Muttaraiyar, 143
Museums
  Asutosh, 148
  Baroda, 136
  Gwalior Archaeological, 78
  Los Angeles County, 82
  Lucknow, 40, 47, 111
  National, 75, 82
  Patna, 113
  Sagar University, 9
  Vidisha, 78
  Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri, 134

Nāgarāja, 148
Nāgas, 44, 49, 156
Naharghaṭi, 63, 83, 88, 89, 91, 93, 94, 108, 126, 127
Naigameṣā, 37-39, 43, 44, 56, 113
naigameṣapahṛtta, 43
naigameṣarata, 43
Naigameṣin, 37, 45
Naigameya, 37, 40, 43
Nanda, 81
Nand-Chand, 89-91, 93, 94, 105, 125, 138, 139, 149, 150
Nandī, 105, 110, 115, 121, 135
Narasiṁha, 66
Narasiṁhī, 1, 60, 64, 66
Nara-Varāha, 135
Naṭarāja, 126, 149, 177
Naṭeśa, 173
National Museum, 78, 82
Nātya Mātrās, 9, 61
Nātya Śāstra, 9, 61
Nava-Durgās, 59
Navagrahas, 114
Nayadhammakahāo, 43
Negameṣī, 37, 43
Neminātha Carita, 43
neo-Brāhmaṇic-Purāṇic religion, 158
neo-Brāhmaṇic religion, 6, 25, 55
neo-Brāhmaṇical ideology, 167
    triads, 159, 173
    Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu

neo-Brāhmaṇism, 3, 31, 36, 41, 62, 155, 160, 162
neo-Brāhmaṇism and the Acculturation of Goddesses, 155, 174
Neumann, Erich, 16
Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Mahādeva temple, 136, 137
Nin-Khursag, 14
Nin-makh, 14
Nin-tu, 14
Nirṛtic, 19
Niśuṁbha, 63, 64, 142

O'Flaherty, Wendy, 56
Old stone age, 14

Pachar, 113, 114, 126
Padma Purāṇa, 9
*padma*s, 170
Pal, Pratapaditya, 73, 82, 95
Pāla, 113
Palalā, 35, 37, 56
paleography, 114
Paleolithic period, 17
Paleo-Mediterranean, 17
Pallava, 88, 121, 123, 125, 143
pan-Brāhmaṇical ethos, 133
Pañcadevopāsanā, 160
Pañcāyatana, 160
Panchar, 111
Pañcikā, 46
Pāṇḍya, 143
Pāṇḍyan, 121, 124, 143
Panigrahi, K.R., 114, 146, 147
pan-Indian iconographical format, 110
Paramountcy Śāktism via Tāntrism — Orissa, 146
Paraśurāmeśvara temple, 112, 114, 126-28, 147
Pariahas, 14
Parimoo, Ratan, 1
Parthian, 73
Pārvatī, 19, 49, 56, 60, 63, 75, 87, 91, 93, 96, 113, 114, 117, 120, 123, 147-49, 165, 173, 174
Pasthar, 105, 109
Pāśupatas, 165
Patil, D.R., 78
Patna Museum, 113
Perunkanchi, 144
phallic worship, 15
Phalodi, 108
Pitari, 124
Pleiades, 57
Pollock, Griselda, 5
Post-Vedic Literary sources, 22
  Kena Upaniṣad, 23
  Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, 23
    Saṁhitā, 23
  Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, 23
pradhāna, 164, 165
Pradyumna, 43, 160
Prajāpati, 172
prakṛti, 16, 25, 55, 58, 163-65
Pramod Chandra, 140
Proddutri, 122, 123, 127
proto-grāmamātṛkās, 17
Proto-Saptamātṛkās, 12, 13, 17, 22
Pṛthvī, 18, 24, 139
Pulakeśin II, 124
Purāṇas
  Agni, 9, 37, 55, 64
  Brahmāṇḍa, 9, 37, 55
  Devī, 65, 147
  Harivaṃśa, 41, 160
  Kūrma, 9
  Liṅga, 9, 40
  Matsya, 9, 64
  Padma, 9
  Śākta, 25

  Śiva, 39, 55
  Skanda, 9, 37, 55, 56
  Vāmana, 9, 37, 43, 55, 64
  Varāha, 55, 64, 117
  Vāyu, 55, 56
Purāṇic concept of goddesses, 169
  Devī, 158
  Durgā, 23
  literature, 167
  Mātṛkās, 19, 24, 167
  Myths, 166, 167, 174
  religion, 6
  Śaivism, 24
  Saptamātṛkās, 7, 11, 16, 22, 31, 48, 96, 171
  Śiva, 86
puruṣa, 22
Puṣpabhūti, 61
Puṣpavaneśvara, 144
Pūtanā, 32, 36-38, 56
  iconographic features, 42

Rabāri, 80
Rajan, Soundara, 95, 136
Rajendra Prasad, 122
Rajghati, 83, 88, 93, 94, 105
Raju Kalidas, 143
Raktabīja, 64, 117
Ramaliṅgeśvara temple, 122
Rāmāyaṇa, 159
Rānimārs, 12
Rao, Gopinath, 64
Rao, S.R., 14
Rāṣṭrakūṭa, 123, 141-43
Rātri, 19
Rātrisūkta, 58
Raudrī, 60
Ravulaphadi, 84-87, 94-96, 108, 115, 121, 126, 174, 175
reflection theory, 15
religious consciousness, 4
representational models, 4
Revākhaṇḍa, 9
Revatī, 36-38, 40, 45, 56
Ṛgveda, 1, 13, 18-20, 24, 40, 43, 58, 159, 169
  maṇḍala, 21
  Khila-khaṇḍa, 37
Ṛgveda Saṁhitā, 9
Ṛgvedic hymns, 57
  passage, 13
Roman, 73
Ṛṣi Medhas, 63
Rudra, 23, 24, 32, 35, 37, 44, 56, 61
  Śiva, 156
Rudrāṇī, 18, 55
Rūpamaṇḍana, 66
Ruruvakarṇāgama, 10

Śabaras, 165
Ṣaḍānana, 62
Sadhumravarṇā, 21
Sadvṛtti, 56
Sagar University Museum, 9
Sahani, D.R., 89
Śaiva, 3, 6, 22, 24, 25, 96, 117, 118, 141, 143, 146, 148, 157, 160, 161, 166, 173, 174
  cult, 86
  dominance, 108
Śaivaite, 117, 125, 144, 146
Śaivism, 23, 75
Śākhā, 37, 40, 56
Śakra, 42, 43
Śākta, 5, 25, 55, 58, 59, 137, 141, 143, 146, 157, 161, 165-67, 169, 170, 171
  autonomy, 146
  cult, 24, 25, 56, 118, 148, 158, 173
  ideology, 174

  Purāṇa, 25
  religion, 21, 25, 49, 58, 112, 148, 155, 156, 174
  Tantrācāra, 171
  Tāntrism, 165
Śakti, 1, 2, 4, 14, 18, 22, 23, 25, 31, 49, 55, 58, 63, 75, 161, 168
  various *śakti*s, Aindrī, Brahmāṇī, Cāmuṇḍā, Kaumāri, Maheśvarī, Mātṛkās, Narasiṁhī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī
  cult, 6, 85, 117, 163, 171, 172, 175
  iconographic description, 64
  myth, 166
  kuṇḍalinī, 170
  *pīṭha*s, 112
  potentialities, 63
Śāktism, 22, 24, 25, 146, 161
  connection with *Śaiva* & *Vaiṣṇava*, 22
Śākunī, 33, 36-38, 41, 42, 45
Śalyaparva, 9, 33, 37, 55
samādhi, 63, 148
Samalji, 7, 73, 79-85, 92, 94, 95, 103-10, 116, 119, 125-28, 137, 150, 176
Śaṁbhu, 75
Śāṁkhya, 22, 24, 58, 59, 162-65, 171
Śāṁkhya Kārikā, 164
Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhyasūtra, 43
Sapta Kannimārs, 124
Saptamātṛkā, 2, 57, 11, 18, 19-22, 31, 32, 34, 40, 41, 45, 48, 49, 55-59, 61-65, 74-76, 78, 82-86, 91, 92, 95, 104, 107, 110, 112-14, 117, 120-22, 124, 125, 136, 137, 141, 143, 144, 146, 150, 161, 167-73, 175, 176
  cult, 116, 124
  iconography, 7, 49, 71, 75, 77, 79, 85, 88, 95, 148, 166, 168
  iconology, 3, 65, 93, 133, 143, 155
  in myths, 63
  origin, 9
  paṭa, 111
  prototypes, 9
  sculptures, 72, 169
  symbolism, 166, 175
  three groups, 88
  Vedic sources, 20
*Sapta-Ṛṣi-Patnī*s, 56, 74, 78
Saptasindhu, 13, 21, 57
  Candrabhāgā, Irāvatī, Sarasvatī, Śatadru, Sindhu, Vipāsā, Vitastā
Saraikela, 113, 127, 128
Śaramā, 19, 36, 56
Sara Schastok ***see also*** Schastok, S.L.
Sārasvat, 21
Sarasvatī, 18
Sārnāth, 73
Ṣaṣṭhī, 32, 38, 45, 56
Sastri, K.N., 3
Śatadru, 21
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 57
Sātapsaras, 12
Śatarudrīya, 24
Satyabhāmā, 43
Saurika Yakṣa, 44
Sāvitrī, 56
Sāyaṇa, 23
Schastok, Sara L., 73, 80, 81, 82, 85, 92, 95, 104
Scythian, 73
Sengupta, R., 142
Śeṣa, 172
Śeṣāśāyī Viṣṇu, 1
Shah, C.J., 42
Shah, U.P., 33, 37, 38, 42-45, 73-75, 80, 81, 93, 113
Shanmugam, P., 125
Sharma, R.S., 165
Shining ones, 19
  Agni, Indra, Varuṇa
Śilappadikaram, 124
*Śilpa Śāstra*s, 2, 10

- *Aparājītapṛcchā*
- *Mānasollāsa*

Śilpa texts, 65
Sīmantonnayan ceremony, 43
Siṁhavāhinī Aṁbikā, 141
Sindhu, 21
Sindhumātarāha, 20
sindhuvāha, 20
Sindhvai Mātā temple, 136
Sinha, Kanchan, 40
Sinivālī, 50
Sircar, D.C., 60
Śiśu, 35, 37
Śiśumātaraḥ, 37
Śītalā, 12
Śītapūtanā, 36, 37, 42, 56
Śiva, 1, 2, 9, 24, 25, 38, 40, 44, 48, 56, 58, 59, 63, 64, 75-77, 79, 82-90, 93, 95, 96, 104-11, 113-15, 117-26, 135-37, 141, 143, 144, 148, 149, 159-62, 167, 172-75, 177
Śiva Dakṣināmūrti, 143
- ***see also*** Dakṣināmūrti

Śivadūti, 64, 142, 147
Śiva-Naṭarāja, 86, 87, 137, 140, 177
- ***see also*** Naṭarāja

Śiva Purāṇa, 39, 55
Śiva Tāṇḍava, 120
Si-yu-ki, 165
Skanda, 7, 9, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 43-46, 48, 55-58, 60-62, 74, 75, 77-79, 82, 84, 85-87, 92, 93, 95, 108, 109, 168, 173, 174
- *Apasmāra*, 35
- appointment as *devasenādhipati*, 38
- birth, 33, 35, 38, 41
- cult, 32, 55
- gods, 40
  - Naigameṣa, Śākhā, Viśākhā
- Kārttikeya, 40, 48
- origin, 32
- *mātā*, 75, 93
- multiple parentage, 36
- *Purāṇa*, 9, 37, 55, 56

Skandagupta, 60
Smārta brāhmaṇa, 160
Smārta rites, 37
Smith, V.A., 42
Soma, 20, 57
Soundara Rajan, K.V., 116
Sphulliṅginī, 21
Śrī, 47
Śrī-Cāmuṇḍā, 65
Śrī Lakṣmī, 7, 24, 48, 87, 156, 158, 162, 163, 166
Srimadevata, 47
Srinivasan, K.R., 112, 124
Śrī-Sūkta, 47
Sthānāṅga Sūtra, 43
Storied icons, 8
Śūdraka, 9, 61
- *Mṛcchakaṭīka*

Sukhapradā, 56
Sukumārikā, 37
Sulasa, 42
Sullivan, Herbert, P., 12
Sulohitā, 21
Śuṁbha, 63, 64, 142
Sumerians, 14
- mythology, 13

Suprabhedāgama, 10
Surabhi, 36
Suratha, 63, 148
Sūrya, 20, 160, 172, 173
Suśruta Saṁhitā, 9, 32, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45
Suṣumnā-Cord, 170
Sūtras, 9
Svāhā, 35, 38, 56, 95, 96
Svāmībhaṭa, 63, 89
svarṇakuṇḍa, 38

Śvetāmbara-Digaṁbara schism, 44
Śvetāmbara Jain, 42
Śvetāśvatara, 9

Taittirīya, 9
  Āraṇyaka, 23
  Saṁhitā, 23, 57
Takli, 120
Talagunda, 62
Tāmasī Pūtanā, 37
Tammuz, 14
Tanesara, 7, 73, 81-83, 85, 94, 95, 104, 105, 108, 128, 176
Tantras, 112, 162-65, 171
  of seven Śaktis
    Kulakuṇḍalinī, Lākinī, Vāruṇī, 170
Tāntric affiliation, 146
  Cakra, 60, 171
  orientation, 112
  philosophy, 59, 146
  practices, 163
  religion, 21, 22
  ritualism, 58, 60, 62, 164
  Sāṁkhya's, Śāstras, 170
  tradition, 16, 175, 176
Tāntrism, 16, 58, 61, 164, 165, 170
Tapo, 35
Tārā, 59
Tārakāsura, 56
Tāriṇī, 24
Taxila, 15
Tayapur, 47
Temples
  Arka Brahma, 122
  Bāla-Brahma, 121, 122, 126-28, 145
  Caunsaṭh yoginī, 138
  Ekādaśalingeśvara, 136
  Kailāśanātha, 124, 127, 141, 143, 146, 149, 150
  Kapoteśvara, 123, 128, 145
  Koṭiyarka, 74
  Kumbharia, 43
  Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Mahādeva, 136, 137
  Paraśurāmeśvara, 112, 114, 126-28, 147
  Rāmaliṅgeśvara, 122
  Sindhvai Mātā, 136
  Vaital-Deul, 146, 148-50
Terracotta sculptures, 41
Therianthropic Mātṛkās, 34, 40, 41
Thiruvarur, 144
Thomson, 164
Tintoi, 81, 83, 84, 92, 93, 95, 103, 116, 128, 177
Tīrthaṅkara, 44
Tirugokarnam, 143
Tirukkalakkuṇḍi, 143
Tiruppunturutti, 144
Tiwari, J.N., 33
  The Goddess Cult in Ancient India
Tondaimandalam, 124
Tripuruṣa, 159, 160
Triśalā, 42, 44
tutelary deity, 42
  goddesses, 36, 55
  propitiation, 43

Udayagiri, 7, 75-78, 93, 94, 108, 165, 172, 175
Umā, 19, 23, 24, 35
Umāpati, 23
Umbaradatta yakṣa, 44
Upaniṣadic *Brahman*, 158
Upaniṣads, 9
Uṣas, 15, 19, 23
Utpala, 60
Uttaratantra, 35

Vachaspatya, 64
Vadaval, 136, 137, 177

Vadayal, 116
Vāgīśvara Cave, 143
Vaimitrā, 56
Vaiṣṇava, 1, 6, 22, 24, 59, 157, 160, 161
Vaiṣṇavī, 1, 60, 64-66, 76-78, 84, 88-90, 93, 104, 105, 107-09, 111-13, 115, 118, 119, 121-23, 125, 126, 128, 135-37, 140, 144, 146, 147, 173, 175
  her iconographical identity, 57
Vaiṣṇavism, 25, 162
Vaiśravaṇa, 44
Vaital-Deul temple, 146, 148-50
Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, 23
Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, 9
Vāmācāra, 16
Vāmana Purāṇa, 9, 37, 43, 55, 64
Vanaparva, 9
Varāha, 66, 109, 139, 148, 173
Varāhamihira, 9, 60
  Bṛhat Saṁhitā
Varāha Purāṇa, 55, 64, 117
Vārāhī, 1, 60, 64-66, 77, 85, 87, 89, 94, 104-10, 112, 113, 115, 119-23, 125, 126, 128, 134-37, 139, 140, 144, 147, 149, 167, 173, 177,
  iconography, 114
Varman, 138
Varṇa stipulations, 164
Vartol, 81, 94
Varuṇa, 3, 4, 19-21, 173
Vāruṇī, 18, 60, 170
Vāsudevahiṇḍi, 43
Vasudharā, 32, 46
Vasus, 172
Vāyavī, 96, 104-07, 128, 135, 136, 150
Vāyu Purāṇa, 55, 56
Vedas, 18, 21, 160, 168, 174
  concept of heptads, 18
  place of goddesses, 18
Vedānta, 164
  text sources
    Āraṇyaka, Brāhmaṇa, Upaniṣads, Veda-Saṁhitā
Vedic culture, 11
  heptads, 22, 56-59, 172
  literature, 8, 18, 37, 57
    text sources
    Artha, Dharma, Śāstras, Mahābhārata, Purāṇas, Sūtras, 8
Vedic Nejamesa, 43
  polarization, 156
  religion, 20
  tradition, 6, 16
Vetālas, 146
Vibhūti-vāda, 161
Vidisha Museum, 78
Vidūṣaka, 61
Vidyā, 56
  Dehejia, 145
  -dharas, 120
Vighneśvara, 174
Vijayāditya I, 62
  II, 62
Vikramāditya I, 62
Vilāsavatī, 61
Vīṇādhara, 62, 126
  Śiva, 93, 126, 149, 173
Vinatā, 56
Vināyaka, 174
Vināyakī, 60, 96
Vipāka Sūtra, 44
Vipāsā, 21
Vīrabhadra, 115, 126, 138
Vīrasena, 75
Vīrāṣṭaka, 37
Vīreśa, 66, 148, 149, 173
Vīreśa Śiva, 146

Viśākhā, 37, 40
Viṣṇu, 24, 25, 59-64, 66, 90, 105, 148, 159-62, 166, 172, 173
Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, 9, 64, 105
Vispati, 13
Viśvakarman, 172
Viśvaksena, 137
Viśvarūpī, 21, 109
Viśvavarman, 60, 165
Vitastā, 21
Vṛṣabha, 37, 56, 57

Williams, Joanna, 108
Winternitz, 40

Yajñaśālā, 143
Yājñavalkya Smṛti, 174
Yajurveda, 19
Yakṣa, 44, 47, 49, 61, 82, 156
Yakṣī, 24
Yakṣīnīs, 47, 158
Yama, 172
Yamī, 60
Yantra Vidhāna, 170
Yaśodā, 80, 81
Yaswant Rao Holkar Chatri Museum, 134
Yoganidrā, 58
Yogeśvarī, 64, 65, 117
Yogic-Tāntric-*Sādhanā*, 169, 170
*Yoginī*s, 9
Yudhiṣṭhira, 159, 160

Zimmer, 142

पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

103651

PRESENTED BY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

GURUKUL KANGRI LIBRARY

	Signature	Date
Acces		1-1-99 99
	R E	23.1.99
..ed		21-1-99
Filing		
E.A.R		24.2.99
Any other	R E	23.1.99
Checked		23-1-99

STOCK VERIFY
2020
G.K.V. Library

Shivaji K. Panikkar has had his specialized training and doctorate in Art History at the Department of Art History and Aesthetics, Faculty of Fine Arts, the M.S. University of Baroda. And has also had the UGC's (University Grants Commission's) 2-year Research Fellowship: 1980-82, for an ambitious research project, namely, *Encyclopaedic Index of Vaiṣṇava Myths, Symbols and Icons in Indian Painting and Sculpture : A Study in Meaning.*

Currently Reader in Art History at Baroda's M.S. University, Dr. Panikkar is indisputably an untiring researcher, with varied concerns: ranging from contemporary art practices to the issues of interrelationship of art, politics and ideology in both traditional and modern arts. Already his published work comprises a considerable body of writings that include exhibition catalogues and thematic articles — besides three volumes of edited works on different genres of art, in his capacity as an assistant editor and co-editor.

Compiled
1999-2000

The worship of *Saptamātṛkā*; the seven Mother Goddesses (or the seven *Sakti*s, the divine feminine powers), is over a millennia and half old, pan-Indian phenomenon. And, over the centuries, the *Mātṛkā* concept has come to have varied ideational, literary, visual and ritualistic manifestations — which not just interconnect the totality of Brāhmanical and non-Brāhmanical religious traditions, but are integral components of the diverse historical processes of Indian society.

A reputed scholar of art history here offers an insightful iconological study of *Saptamātṛkā* divinities : the Brāhmanical goddesses found invariably as a single collective whole, consisting literally of seven (though sometimes eight or more) female deities, variably accompanied by different forms of Śiva, and Gaṇeśa or Skanda. Employing the multidisciplinary methodo-logies of art historical interpretation, including the recent feminist interventions, Dr. Panikkar's inquiry contextualises nearly the whole range of *Saptamātṛkā* icons within the larger historical evolution of accultured Brāhmanical religion, mythology, theology and concomitant multifarious cultic developments. Also clarifying some of the basic principles of Brāhmanical iconic tradition, his study has, for the first time, exceeded the accepted Art Historical procedures by incorporating the questions of class conflict, gender 'representations' and ideology within the iconological discourse — and has, thus, advanced the frontiers of Art Historical practice.

It is a compelling, painstakingly researched work growing from the author's indepth survey of diverse *Saptamātṛkā* sculptures and an astonishing mass of both primary textual sources and research publications of more recent years. And, yet more significantly, it is enlivened with exquisite visual material: comprising nearly 200 photographic reproductions.

D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd.
An Intercontinental Publishing Enterprise
Regd. office: 'Sri Kunj', F-52 Bali Nagar, NEW DELHI-110 015
Phone: (011) 546-6019; *Fax:* (011) 546-5926